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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈہ روزنامہ بنگلور

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On the occasion of Deepavali, our office will remain closed on 31 October. Hence, there will be no edition of Salar Digital English Daily dated 1 November

# Canada alleges Shah behind plot to target Khalistanis

## Canada admits to leaking 'intel' against India to US newspaper

**OTTAWA, 30 OCT**

A Canadian Minister alleged on Tuesday that Home Minister Amit Shah ordered a campaign of violence, intimidation and intelligence-gathering targeting Sikh separatists inside Canada.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison told Parliament members of the national security com-mittee that he had confirmed Shah's name to The Washington Post, which first reported the allegations.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said a year ago that Canada had credible evidence agents of the Indian government were involved in the murder of Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Colum-bia in June 2023.

Canada has repeatedly said they have shared evidence of that with Indian authorities.

Home Minister Amit Shah and Canada's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison *PHOTO: PTI*

Canada is not the only country that has accused Indian officials of plotting an assassination on foreign soil. The United States Justice Department announced criminal charges in mid-October against an Indian government employee in connection with an alleged foiled plot to kill a Sikh separatist leader living in New York City.

In the case announced by the Justice Department, Vikash Yadav, who authorities say directed the New York plot from India, faces murder-for-hire charges in a planned killing that prosecutors have previously said was meant to precede a string of other politically motivated murders in the United States and Can-ada.

Nathalie Drouin, Trudeau's National Security Adviser, told the committee on Tuesday that Canada has evidence the Indian government first gathered information on Indian nationals and Canadian citizens in Canada through diplomatic channels and proxies.

She said the information was then passed to the government in New Delhi, which allegedly works with a criminal network affiliated with Lawrence Bishnoi. Bishnoi is currently in prison in India, but Drouin said his vast criminal network has been linked to homi-cides, assassination plots, coercion and other violent crimes in Canada.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police went public with allegations that Indian diplomats were persons of in-terest in criminal investigations.

Drouin said a meeting was held with Modi's national security adviser, Ajit Doval, in Singapore two days earlier.

The Indian government denies the allegations and has expelled six Canadian diplomats. Nijjar, 45, was shot in his pickup truck after he left the Sikh temple he led in Surrey, British Columbia. An Indian-born citizen of Canada, he was a leader in what remains of a once-strong movement to create an independent Sikh homeland. *—PTI*

## AFTER 4 MONTHS' JAIL

Darshan Thoogudeepa walks out of Ballari Jail on Wednesday *PHOTO: ANI*

# Darshan gets interim bail for spine surgery

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

In a relief to actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, an accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, the High Court on Wednesday granted him interim bail on medical grounds, to undergo spine surgery.

The 47-year-old was arrested on 11 June and is lodged in Ballari prison.

His friend Pavithra Gowda and 15 others are co-accused in the case.

Pavithra is lodged in Bengaluru prison, and others in various jails of the State; some of them have recent-ly got bail.

The bench granted interim bail to Darshan for a period of six weeks.

As per conditions imposed by the court, Darshan will have to surrender his passport before the trial court and should not tamper with evidence.

The court said that he can take treatment at a hospital of his choice and submit a report to the court on his health condition, required treatment and follow-up treatment within a week.

The court had reserved the order on Tuesday on the interim bail application.

The State had presented medical reports in a sealed cover from doctors at Ballari central prisonand the Head of the Department of Neurology at a government hospital.

Darshan's bail application, submitted on 21 September, was rejected by a sessions court. Following this, he petitioned the High Court and requested interim bail to receive treatment. According to police, 33-year-old Renukaswamy had allegedly sent obscene messages to Pavithra, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder.

His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on 9 June. *—PTI*

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# India, China complete LAC disengagement

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Troop disengagement at two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh following a key agreement firmed up between India and China has been completed and patrolling will commence soon at these points, Indian Army sources said on Wednesday.

Exchange of sweets between the sides will take place on Diwali tomorrow, they said.

The sources added that verification post-disengagement is in progress and patrolling modalities are to be decided between ground commanders. Talks will continue at the local commander level, an Army source said.

On 25 October, Army sources here said the process was likely to get completed by 28-29 October.

The agreement framework was signed first at the diplomatic level and then military-level talks took place, they had said, adding the nitty-gritty of the agreement was worked on during the Corps Com-mander-level talks which was signed last week. Adhering to agreements between the two sides, Indian troops then began to pull back equipment to rear locations in these areas. The process follows the agreement firmed up between the two countries on patrolling and disengage-ment of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff. *—PTI*

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## NEET PG counselling to start from 11 November

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

The Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) is set to release the schedule for the NEET PG 2024 counsel-ling process on 11 November 2024. Reports from the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FOR-DA) confirmed the date, though the organisation expressed concerns over the timeline. FORDA stated, "The 4-month delay makes the timeline for 2025 challeng-ing. The vicious cycle contin-ues for the 3rd year straight. Will this ever end?" Candidates awaiting counsel-ling can access the schedule on the MCC's official website once released and can choose their preferred col-leges and courses. Additionally, Survankar Datta, president of the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), as-sured candidates in a recent post that delays affecting the release of the counselling schedule have been resolved, and it will be available soon. *—Salar News*

## K'TAKA TO REVIEW 'SHAKTI SCHEME'

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday said the government will review the Shakti scheme after several women commut-ers have expressed their wish to pay for their bus tickets.

After flagging off new Airavata club class 2.0 buses of the State-owned Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Shivakumar said, "Many women have been communicating to us through social media and emails that they would like to pay for their tickets. We will discuss this."

Shakti scheme is one of the five pre-poll guarantees of Congress government. It offers free ride to women in non-luxury buses across Karnataka.

As on 18 October, 2024, the State spent Rs 7,507.35 crore on the Shakti scheme for the 311.07 crore free rides by the women. *—PTI*

## WORLD RECORD IN AYODHYA

People watch as fireworks light up the sky during Deepotsav near Saryu River on the eve of Deepavali, in Ayodhya, on Wednesday. Two Guinness World Records were set at the eighth edition of Deepotsav here with 25 lakh earthen lamps (diyas) lit together and 1,121 'vedacharyas' (teachers of religious texts) performing aarti simultaneously. This is the first Deepavali after Ram Temple's consecration ceremony *PHOTO: PTI* ***>>>MORE ON PAGE 3***

## BMTC BUS RUNS OVER BIKER IN INDIRANAGAR

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

A biker was crushed to death on Wednesday after he came under the rear wheels of a Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus.

The incident occurred around 11.25am near BDA complex in Indiranagar, involving a bus from Depot-06.

According to BMTC offi-cials, the driver, Nagaraju, was returning to the depot on a narrow service road after completing his duties.

At that moment, the biker attempted to overtake the bus from the right side. Upon noticing a tempo parked on the road, Nagaraju applied the brakes immediately.

The biker lost control of his motorcycle and fell beneath the rear right wheel of the moving bus.

In another incident, an 18-year-old biker Rahul, a res-ident of Chikkaballapur, died on the spot after his motorcy-cle collided with a road divid-er near Chikkasanne Gate on the Bengaluru-Hyderabad highway. *—Salar News*

## Homecoming: Kohli to return as RCB Captain after 3 yrs

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Virat Kohli is poised to reclaim the captaincy for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the upcoming IPL 2025 season. Following dis-cussions with the team's management, Kohli is eager to take on the leader-ship role again after a brief gap. Kohli's closest bid for the trophy was in 2016, where RCB narrowly lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad in the final. Although he stepped down from captaincy in 2021, he affirmed his commitment to RCB. While RCB explored other captaincy options, including Shubman Gill, plans did not set in. There are also rumors that the franchise may target Rishabh Pant in the upcoming auction.

*—Salar with agencies*

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# Green crackers a big flop in B'luru

**HAMEED ASHRAF**
**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

As the festival of lights approaches, Bengaluru finds itself at a crossroads between tradition and environmental responsibility. Despite a reg-ulatory push to promote eco-friendly celebrations, the demand for traditional fire-crackers remains high, lead-ing to a concerning divide among residents.

### City divided

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has reportedly issued licens-es for only 456 stalls to sell green crackers—fireworks made with reduced harmful chemicals intended to minimise pollu-tion and sound lev-els. However, reports indicate that many stalls, especially in areas such as Attibele, Chandapura, Hebbagodi, and Surya Nagar, are allegedly flouting regula-tions by selling non-green variants instead. Many ven-dors report that their green stock often goes unsold, as consumers flock to the more familiar non-green options.

### Vendors' dilemma

Shopkeepers like Ramraj from Attibele told Salar News, "We need to do busi-ness, and we're following safety measures. If we don't sell non-green crackers, our customers will simply go to Hosur in Tamil Nadu to buy them." He added that there seems to be little interest in green crackers, despite their eco-friendly benefits.

Naveen Kumar, another vendor from Hebbagodi, echoed these concerns. "We have obtained permits and paid taxes, including GST. Yet, some vendors sell fire-crackers from Hosur without any permits or taxes," he said, highlighting the chal-lenges of competing with illegal sellers.

While many attribute this to a lack of aware-ness, dealers admit that their primary con-cern this festive season is to maximise profits, which will only happen if they sell the non-green cracker-variants.

The State government, in compliance with Supreme Court guidelines, implement-ed a ban on traditional fire-crackers to curb pollution. Additionally, it has mandat-ed that crackers can only be burst between 8pm and 10pm. However, the enforcement of these regulations appears inconsistent. *—Salar News*

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**HELPLINE FOR EMERGENCIES: 9481740137 & 08026707176**

## BOMB THREAT: SECURITY TO CHECK VIP STATUS, SOCIAL MEDIA

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Pseudonymous or anonymous nature of the social media han-dle, analysis of the geopolitical situation and presence of VIPs onboard are the new criteria that agencies will keep in mind while considering the seri-ousness of a bomb threat made to Indian airlines. The new set of guidelines were issued by Bureau of Civil Aviation (BCAS).

In the past two weeks, 510 flights received bomb threats. The threats were issued through anony-mous handles on X. Officials will adopt a "multi-layered" approach to assess threats and determine the "credibility and seriousness" of such threats issued on social media. Some additional questions will now be answered by security before categorising a threat as specif-ic. *—PTI*

## 67 OTHERS WIN TOO

# *Moily, Yogiraj bag Rajyothsava Award*

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Former chief minister and writ-er M Veerappa Moily, activist BT Lalitha Naik, former chief secretary SV Ranganath and hockey player Jude Felix Sebastian are among the 69 peo-ple chosen for Karnataka Rajyothsava Award - 2024.

Arun Yogiraj, who sculpted Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya, and Dr Thumbay Moideen, founder and president of Thumbay Group, UAE, also made it to the list. Environmentalist Almitra Patil, who was at the forefront of streamlining solid waste management in Bengaluru was bestowed the award for her con-tribution to environment con-servation.

Three people from outside Karnataka too bagged the award, including Kannaiah Naidu, who led a team in fixing the crest gate of Pampa Sagar dam on Tungabhadra river at Hospet-Koppal confluence.

These awards, carry-ing a purse of Rs 5 lakh, a 25-gram gold medal and a memento, will be presented on 1 November when the State cele-brates its forma-tion day. Apart from these 69 peo-ple, 50 men and 50 women would receive 'Suvarna Mahotsava Prashasti', an award to commemorate the State being renamed as Karnataka. Other awardees include blind artist Narasimhulu, Basavaraja Sangappa Harivala and Imamsab M Vallepanavar (folk art category); Hema Chaudhary and MS Narasimha Murthy (film and television); for-mer IAS officer V Ranganath (administra-tion); Basavaraj Badigere (sculptures); Balasaheb Lokapur (lit-erature); and Sitarama Tholpadi and Keshava Hegde Kolagi for Yakshagana among oth-ers. *—Salar News*

## Courts can't ask for bonds months after bail: SC

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Supreme Court said courts cannot impose a condition on the accused to furnish bail bonds after six months of the passing of the bail order.

A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma said if the court was satisfied on merits, it should either grant bail or reject it.

On 24 October, the apex court dealt with a petition filed by a man who had challenged an order of the Patna High Court, direct-ing him to furnish bail bonds after six months in a case against him under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Amendment Act.

The man was, therefore, directed to be released by the trial court on bail upon furnishing bonds of Rs 10,000 with two sureties of the like amount. *—PTI*

# Outcry & joy as Darshan walks free

## Guilty will be punished, says Renukaswamy's dad

**DAVANGERE, 30 OCT**

Family of Renukaswamy, who was allegedly killed by actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and others, on Wednesday declined to comment on Karnataka High Court granting the actor interim bail on medical grounds but expressed confidence that the guilty will be punished as they have faith in judiciary and police.

"We don't have anything to say other than that the guilty should be punished. We have faith in law and judiciary, so we are confident that the guilty will be punished," father of Renukaswamy Kashinatha Shivanagowdara said.

"Bail has been granted under the legal system, we cannot comment on it. We have faith that the guilty will be punished. We have faith in law and the police. (Darshan's) treatment is a matter for the Doctor, him and the court, we don't want to comment on it," Renukaswamy's father Kashinath Shivanagoudar told reporters.

Sahana, wife of Renukaswamy, had given birth to a baby boy on 16 October. She was five months pregnant when her husband was killed. Darshan was arrested on 11 June and is lodged in Ballari prison. His friend Pavithra Gowda and 15 others are co-accused in the case.

Raghavendra, one of the accused who is part of Darshan's fan club in Chitradurga, had brought Renukaswamy to a shed in R R Nagar here, on the pretext that the actor wanted to meet him. It was in this shed that he was allegedly tortured and murdered.

According to the post-mortem report, Renukaswamy, a native of Chitradurga, died due to shock and hemorrhage as a result of multiple blunt injuries. —*PTI*

File picture of CM Siddaramaiah meeting Renukaswamy's kin ***PHOTO: SALAR***

## Hundreds of fans distribute sweets, burst crackers

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Darshan Thoogudeepa's fans burst into celebration in various parts of Karnataka on Wednesday, after news broke that the Karnataka High Court granted the actor, an accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, an interim bail on medical grounds.

Darshan's wife Vijayalakshmi performed a special prayer at Durgamma temple in the district headquarters town of Ballari, where her husband is lodged in a prison. Waving Darshan's posters, hundreds of his fans distributed sweets and burst crackers in several areas of Ballari and Bengaluru, among others.

Karnataka Housing and Waqf Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan expressed his joy over the interim bail granted to Darshan.

"He is my close friend. Obviously I am happy. I used to meet him at least once in two months before he was jailed," Khan told reporters in the district headquarters town of Haveri.

Fans of actor Darshan Thoogudeepa celebrate across Karnataka ***PHOTO: X***

According to the post-mortem report, Renukaswamy, a native of Chitradurga, died due to shock and hemorrhage as a result of multiple blunt injuries. Police have said Pavithra, who is accused number one, was the "major cause" for Renukaswamy's murder, claiming that it has been proved from the probe that she instigated other accused, conspired with them, and took part in the crime. —*PTI*

**I will not question the verdict of the court. The government will respectfully welcome the decision of the court**

-DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

## Mysuru to host largest drone show at Dasara 2025

**MYSURU, 30 OCT**

Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy announced plans for India's largest drone show during next year's Dasara festival, featuring 4,000 indigenous drones. The goal is to set a national record for the biggest drone display, following a successful 15-minute show this year that attracted around one lakh visitors daily, he said. Reddy credited the Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) and sponsors for their support despite funding challenges. The show highlighted Mysuru's history, heritage, and culture through various media channels. CESC officials and other dignitaries were present at the announcement. —*Salar News*

## 2 held in City for attacking 2 men with daggers

**BENGALURU 30 OCT**

The City police arrested two accused who were on the run after fatally attacking two inebriated men with a dagger, in Rajagopalnagar, on Wednesday. The police identified the accused as Vishwa and Vishnu. The incident took place around 12.30am on Saturday when the victims, Srinivas and Hemanth, were intoxicated and were fighting among themselves. Following a tip, the police nabbed the two hiding at their relative's home in the City. The two accused who were allegedly passing by, approached the men and tried to stop the fight. However, enraged at the intervention, Srinivas and Hemanth began attacking Vishwa and Vishnu. Rajagopalnagar police told Salar News that the accused carried a dagger, and attacked the victims before fleeing the scene. Hemanth also suffered a severe cut on his stomach and Srinivas suffered a deep cut on his leg. —*Salar News*

## SWR returns jewellery worth ₹5.4L left on train

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

A team of officials from the South Western Railway successfully recovered and returned a bag containing gold ornaments valued at approximately Rs 5.4 lakh, which was left behind on a Yesvantpur bound train, to a passenger. Upon receiving information from the Tumakuru outpost regarding a misplaced bag, the railway team promptly sprang into action. The bag was located in the rear general coach of the train at Yesvantpur station, officials said. The recovered bag contained a mangal sutra weighing 40 grams and valued at approximately Rs. 2,80,000, a necklace weighing 20 grams and valued at Rs. 1,40,000, a pair of earrings weighing 10 grams and valued at Rs. 50,000, and a neck chain weighing 10 grams and valued at Rs 70,000. —*PTI*

***PHOTO: SALAR***

## MM Hills in Mysuru gears up for Deepavali

**MYSURU, 30 OCT**

The Chamarajanagar district administration has completed preparations for the five-day Deepavali celebrations at the Male Mahadeshwara Temple in Hanur taluk. The temple is one of the highest revenue-generating Muzrai temples in the State, attracting over 5,00,000 devotees from various districts, including neighbouring Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The festivities include rituals such as Ennemajjana and Deepavali Utsav on 30 October, Narakachatrudashi special pujas on 31 October, Deepavali Amavasya Puja and Halaravi Utsav on 1 November, and the Deepavali Maharathosav, along with a car festival, scheduled for the auspicious time of 7.30 am to 9 am. Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation will operate nearly 500 buses from various districts to MM Hills for this auspicious occasion. —*Salar News*

**WAQF LAND CONTROVERSY**

## BJP has no shame: Ramalinga Reddy

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Karnataka Minister Ramalinga Reddy said on Wednesday that the allegations of land grab by Waqf board have already been clarified by the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and that the government has given instructions to withdraw notices.

He further alleged that some of the notices were given during BJP's rule in the state too. Siddaramaiah "I have already made a statement. We have not issued any notice to the farmers and we are not going to evict anybody who has been in possession of the property for many years."

Ramalinga Reddy ***PHOTO: PTI***

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar accused BJP of "politicising the issue," and that directions have already been given to the revenue department concerning the notices. State Home Minister G Parmeshwara said that the issue is almost over.—*Agencies*

## Tejasvi Surya asks JPC chairman to call farmers

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Wednesday requested Jagdambika Pal, Chairperson of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Waqf amendment bill to call a delegation of farmers from Karnataka who have been affected by having their land allegedly being claimed as Waqf property.

He posted a copy of the letter and said, "Have written to the Chairperson of the JPC on Waqf Amendment Bill Jagdambika Pal, drawing attention to the plight of farmers from Vijayapura District and other areas in the vicinity in Karnataka, who have been wrongfully served notices claiming their land as Waqf property." —*ANI/ PTI*

## TJ ABRAHAM SUES CM FOR CALLING HIM 'BLACKMAILER'

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Advocate-activist TJ Abraham on Wednesday said he has filed a defamation suit against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in a special court here for allegedly calling him a blackmailer.

He is among the petitioners who had urged Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to permit investigation against the Chief Minister in the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam.

"You (Siddaramaiah) have taken 14 sites by creating a bogus and illegal claim and you call me a blackmailer! I have filed a defamation case against you. We will see how you will escape," he said.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout. Under the

TJ Abraham ***PHOTO: PTI***

controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts.

The Chief Minister has denied any wrongdoing in the alleged scam. Based on the petition filed by Abraham, the Governor issued a notice to the Chief Minister on 26 July directing him to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days justifying why permission to prosecute him should not be granted. —*PTI*

## ED TAKES EX-MUDA OFFICER NATESH INTO CUSTODY

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Former Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) Commissioner Natesh has been taken into custody by the officials of the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the case of the alleged illegal allotment of plots in MUDA scam, as per official sources. Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided Natesh's house on Tuesday and questioned him on MUDA scam. Following enquiry, Natesh has been taken into custody by the ED officials, who have taken him to the ED office in Shantinagar. —*ANI*

## KSRTC adds 20 buses at ₹1.78cr each

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) inducted 20 luxury buses -- Airavat Club Class 2.0 model -- each worth Rs 1.78 crore, to its fleet on Wednesday, officials said. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah flagged off the new buses along with Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy. He also took a ride with the Minister in one of those buses. According to KSRTC, Siddaramaiah presented 'Sarige Suraksha' accident relief compensation cheque of Rs one crore each to two deceased employee's (Nagaraju MN, Conductor, Ramanagara Division and Shivanna, Driver-cum-Conductor, Mysuru City Division) dependents.

Chief minister Siddarmaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and others during the flag off event of 24 new Airavat Club class Volvo buses, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Wednesday ***PHOTO:MOHAMMED ASAD***

So far, dependents of 22 deceased employees have been paid with accident compensation of Rs 22 crore. Dependents of five employees, who died due to ailments other than accidents, were also paid family welfare compensation of Rs 10 Lakh each on the occasion.

The new buses have a 3.5 per cent increase in overall bus length. —*PTI*

## State generates ₹1,03,689cr revenue this fiscal

**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

Karnataka has achieved outstanding fiscal performance in the first seven months of 2024-25, generating Rs 1,03,689 crore in revenue, achieving 53 per cent of its annual target of Rs 1,96,525 crore across five major revenue departments, officials said on Wednesday. With a year-on-year growth rate of 11.2 per cent, this achievement reflects the state's robust economic fundamentals driven by strong economic growth, increased consumer demand, better governance, and the government's focus on creating a business-friendly environment. —*PTI*

**JAM-PACKED**

Massive traffic jams on Hosur Road near Electronics City in Bengaluru ahead of Deepavali, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

## Khandre trespassed on HMT land: HDK

**RAMANAGARA, 30 OCT**

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Wednesday alleged that the Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre trespassed on the land belonging to HMT, a central public sector enterprise, under the Ministry of Heavy Industries. Khandre directed officials concerned to take disciplinary action against those who permitted felling of trees in a forest land here.

He also conducted a spot inspection of the site. "We will fight it legally but we will not raise the issue for publicity," Kumaraswamy said. —*PTI*

## JD(S) drops GT Devegowda, Revanna from rallies

**MYSURU, 30 OCT**

Janata Dal (Secular) drops its strongman GT Devegowda, the core committee chairman, from its list of star campaigners for the upcoming bypolls on Wednesday. The bypolls in Shiggavi, Channapatna, and Sandur following the resignation of two former chief ministers Basavaraja Bommai, HD Kumaraswamy, and Sandur MLA Tukaram will be held on 13 November.

JD(S) has fielded its candidate Nikhil Kumaraswamy, son of Kumaraswamy, from the Channapatna constituency where he is fighting against five times MLA, Congress candidate CP Yogeshwar.

Among the 40 members of the list of star campaigners it released, it has also dropped former minister HD Revanna, who is facing legal issues over an alleged sex scandal from its list. Devegowda is miffed with party leaders maintaining distance from activities after his party leaders refused to make him state JD(S) floor leader. He also came under criticism from its party leaders recently for defending Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the MUDA scam during the inauguration of Naada Habba Dasara celebrations. Devegowda has also stated that he was not invited to Channapatna campaign after taking darshan at Hasanamba temple in Hassan.—*Salar News*

**AMID BAN**

## *BBMP, police crackdown on firecracker sales this Deepavali*

**HAMEED ASHRAF**
**BENGALURU, 30 OCT**

With Deepavali right around the corner, authorities in Bengaluru are intensifying efforts to enforce the ban on firecrackers.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and police announced the formation of a task force and patrolling teams dedicated to monitoring the sales of banned firecrackers, with legal action promised against violators.

BBMP officials informed **Salar News** that a check post has been established in Attibele to inspect parcels arriving via buses and private vehicles from Tamil Nadu.

This initiative aims to curb the illegal transportation of traditional firecrackers, which remain in high demand despite the regulations.

Superintendent of Police (SP) for Bengaluru Rural, CK Baba, told Salar News that only licensed vendors are authorised to sell green firecrackers. "If they violate the permit and are caught transporting banned crackers, their licenses will be suspended, and criminal cases will be filed against them," he stated.

In 2023, firecracker sales across the State reached over Rs 400 crore, with only 10 per cent (approximately Rs 40 crore) attributable to non-green options.

Following a tragic explosion at a firecracker factory in Attibele last year that resulted in 14 fatalities, the State implemented a ban on the sale of traditional crackers. However, sales this year are projected to exceed Rs 500 crore as demand remains robust.

BBMP and police announce the formation of a task force and patrolling teams to monitor the sales of banned crackers ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Amid the festive preparations, local hospitals are also bracing for an influx of firecracker-related injuries. Minto Hospital, which used to get eye-injuries, has established a new 35-bed ward and set up 24/7 emergency helplines to respond to incidents. Meanwhile, Victoria Hospital has upgraded its burns care unit to ensure readiness for any related emergencies. Victoria Hospital will have 24x7 dedicated staff and a specialised burns unit. —*Salar News*

### WHAT ARE GREEN CRACKERS?

Green crackers, or eco-friendly firecrackers, are designed to minimise environmental impact. They contain reduced amounts of harmful chemicals and are marked with a unique QR code and logo from the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI). Introduced in 2018 by CSIR-NEERI, these alternatives utilise dust suppressants to lower emissions. Green crackers generate noise levels between 110 and 125 decibels, significantly quieter than traditional options, which can exceed 160 decibels, resulting in approximately 30 per cent less noise. —*Salar News*

## PM inaugurates ₹284cr projects at Statue of Unity

**EKTA NAGAR, 30 OCT**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated or laid foundation stones for various projects as well as tourist attractions worth Rs 284 crore during his visit to the iconic Statue of Unity at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat's Narmada district. Modi is on a two-day Gujarat visit and will participate in Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations during his stay in the state. The birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is celebrated as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) on 31 October. Modi inaugurated several new projects, including a sub-district hospital, smart bus stops, a 4 MW solar project, and two ICU-on-wheels. *—PTI*

## Panel formed to tackle digital arrest scam

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has established a high-level committee to investigate cases related to the digital arrest scam and cyber fraud. This committee, looked after by the Secretary of the Ministry's Internal Security, is mandated to take immediate action against those responsible for such crimes. The ministry's Cybercrime Coordination Centre, known as 14C, has reached out to police forces across all states and union territories to inform them about the committee's formation. This year, over 6,000 complaints of digital arrests have been registered, prompting the 14C to block approximately 600,000 mobile numbers linked to the scam. These scams typically involve fraudsters posing as law enforcement officials, threatening victims during audio or video calls, and falsely claiming to digitally arrest them for drug or money laundering offenses. In response, authorities have frozen around 325,000 fake bank accounts tied to these cyber fraud activities.*—PTI*

## YSRCP calls Jagan's mother biased for siding with Sharmila

**HYDERABAD, 30 OCT**

Amid the ongoing tussle between YSR Congress chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy with his sister and Congress leader YS Sharmila over an inheritance worth crores, their mother YS Vijayamma has written an open letter, supporting Sharmila and saying that it's her "duty to speak up for the unfairly treated child". In response, YSRCP released an open letter, saying "mother has not been neutral". The party said she backed Sharmila and the Congress before and after the Andhra Pradesh Assembly polls. In the state polls held earlier this year, YSRCP suffered a rout and Jagan lost power to arch-rival, TDP Chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Vijayamma slammed baseless claims being spread about her family and said this must stop.*—Agencies*

## TCS pact done in 90 mins, says Nara Lokesh

**AMARAVATI, 30 OCT**

It is no longer 'ease of doing business'. The new mantra of attracting investments is "speed of doing business" which helped the Andhra Pradesh government close the deal with TCS to set up a campus in Visakhapatnam in just 90 minutes, Minister Nara Lokesh said. In an interactive session at the ITServe Alliance Synergy Conference in Las Vegas (USA), Lokesh said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu-led NDA regime in the state is actually looking at business processes reengineering in the government to deliver seamless governance in the hands of people, making officials and politicians irrelevant. "So when I met Chandra Sir (N Chandrasekaran), chairperson of Tata Sons, I was asking him what his advice would be to me. He said just focus on the speed of doing business. *—PTI*

# BJP leads seat count in Mahayuti alliance

## Chennithala says Congress leadership has been asked to ensure all rebels withdraw nominations

**CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 30 OCT**

Of its Mahayuti allies and the three parties in the Opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the BJP is contesting the greatest number of seats – 20 of 46 – in the Marathwada region in the next month's Maharashtra Assembly polls.

The region in central Maharashtra comprises the districts of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Beed, Hingoli, Jalna, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad, and Parbhani. It has been the epicentre of the Maratha protests steered by activist Manoj Jarange.

Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) under Uddhav Thackeray have each fielded candidates in 16 constituencies in this region.

While the Shinde Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP are other Mahayuti allies, Sena (UBT), Congress and Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) form the MVA. In this year's Lok Sabha polls, Mahayuti could win only one of the 8 seats in Marathwada.

Besides BJP (20) and Shiv Sena (16), NCP has nominated 9 candidates in Marathwada for the 20 November polls. The Gangakhed seat has been given to the Mahadev Jankar's Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, which has fielded Ratnakar Gutte, shows nomination data.

Of the MVA constituents, Sena (UBT) will contest in 16 seats, including Sillod, Kannad, Vaijapur, Aurangabad Central, Aurangabad West and Paithan in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district. Five of the six leaders from the undivided Shiv Sena who had won in the district in 2019 subsequently sided with Shinde when he rebelled against the Thackeray-led party in 2022.

Sena (UBT) is not contesting in any constituency in the Beed district. The other two MVA partners, NCP (SP) and Congress, each have got 15 seats to contest in Marathdwada. Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will be held on 20 November and votes will be counted on 23 November. Meanwhile, Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala on Wednesday said the Maharashtra party leadership has been asked to ensure all rebels withdraw nominations and asserted there will be no friendly fights among the MVA allies in the Assembly polls. *—PTI*

Maharashtra Congress party President Nana Patole with Congress in-charge Ramesh Chennithala in Mumbai, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

## VBA candidate Ahmed misses filing nomination by few minutes

**Nagpur, 30 Oct**

Anees Ahmed *PHOTO: FB*

High drama was witnessed at the collectorate here as former Maharashtra minister Anees Ahmed, given ticket by the VBA to contest Nagpur Central seat, missed the deadline for filing nomination by just a few minutes.Ahmed, who won the Nagpur Central seat three times, stayed put at the collectorate till 8pm on Tuesday, the last day of filing nominations, but in vain as his form was not accepted. *—PTI*

## BJP not to campaign for NCP's Nawab Malik

**MUMBAI, 30 OCT**

Nawab Malik *PHOTO: PTI*

- Ajit Pawar-led party gave the nomination form to Malik just minutes before the deadline for the process ended, allowing him to officially contest elections as a party candidate

BJP has made it clear that it will not campaign for ally NCP's candidate Nawab Malik in the assembly polls due to his alleged links with fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim, but has no objection to his daughter's candidature.

Nawab Malik, a former state minister, on Tuesday filed his nomination from the Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar assembly constituency in Mumbai as a candidate of the Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), while the party also gave ticket to his younger daughter, Sana Malik, from the Anushakti Nagar constituency, a seat that her father represented multiple times in the past.

This is Sana Malik's maiden Assembly election.

The Ajit Pawar-led party gave the nomination form to Nawab Malik just minutes before the deadline for the process ended, allowing him to officially contest elections as a party candidate.

BJP's Mumbai unit chief Ashish Shelar on Tuesday evening released a video message making the party's stand clear that it will not campaign for Nawab Malik. Malik, who was a minister in Uddhav Thackeray govt government, had targeted the Mumbai zonal director of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Sameer Wankhede, following the arrest of Aryan Khan, Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son, over alleged possession of drugs on board a cruise ship. *—PTI*

# AAP protests slow paddy lifting; cops use water cannons

**CHANDIGARH, 30 OCT**

Police here on Wednesday used water cannons on AAP's Punjab unit leaders and workers as they tried to march towards the state BJP office to "gherao" it in protest against the slow lifting of paddy in the state.

Several Punjab ministers, including Harjot Singh Bains, Harbhajan Singh, Laljit Singh Bhullar and Tarunpreet Singh Sond, as well as many other party legislators were part of the protest.

Police had set up barricades near the Punjab BJP office. As AAP workers tried to jump over the barricades and move towards BJP office, police used water cannons to stop them. In the melee, Harjot Bains' turban got tossed up.

Before being detained, AAP leaders lashed out at BJP-led Centre for not lifting foodgrain stocks from Punjab and alleged that it did not pay attention to the matter despite being brought to its notice in the past few months.

AAP leader Harjot Singh Bains with other leaders during a protest against the BJP, in Chandigarh on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Sond alleged that the Centre was meting out step-motherly treatment towards Punjab and held it responsible for the current problem.

However, Union Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu claimed that the AAP government was pinning the blame on the Centre "to hide their failures". The Union minister said the Centre has already given more than Rs 44,000 crore to the Punjab government for crop purchase, but the AAP dispensation was unable to discharge its duty. On Tuesday, Punjab minister and senior AAP leader Aman Arora accused the BJP-led Centre of taking revenge on farmers for protesting against the three now-repealed farm laws. *—PTI*

**CHINA WELCOMES MOVE**

## US denies any role in India-China border pact

**WASHINGTON, 30 OCT**

*PHOTO: PTI*

The United States has said that it welcomes any reduction in tension along the India-China border and noted that it has been briefed by New Delhi in this regard.

"We are closely following the developments (between India and China). We understand that both countries have taken initial steps to withdraw troops from friction points along the Line of Actual Control. We welcome any reduction in tensions along the border," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters at his daily news conference on Tuesday.

Responding to a question, Miller said that the US has played no role in this.

"We have talked to our Indian partners and been briefed on it, but we did not play any role in this resolution," Miller said.

Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, on Wednesday expressed hope that the recently completed Indo-China border disengagement in Eastern Ladakh would smoothen relations and pave the way for a better understanding between the two neighbours in the days ahead.

Speaking at a session organised by the Merchant Chamber of Commerce and Industry here, the diplomat also called the recent meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit at Kazan in Russia 'very important'. *—PTI*

## Terrorists in J&K encounter were affiliated with JeM

**JAMMU, 30 OCT**

Three terrorists killed in an encounter with security forces in the Akhnoor sector of the Jammu region were members of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) group and had recently infiltrated into the area from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), officials said on Wednesday.

They said the terrorists were planning a major strike, utilising the Akhnoor route traditionally used by operatives of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group.

According to intelligence reports, the terrorists entered the Akhnoor region through the Battal area, and a wireless set seized from them confirmed their association with the JeM.

Unlike the typical strategies of infiltrating terrorists, who often adopt "conservation and consolidation" tactics, these ultras were reportedly aiming for a substantial attack, the officials said. *—PTI*

## Priyanka will not be with Wayanad: LDF's Mokeri

**WAYANAD, 30 OCT**

Ruling LDF candidate in Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll Sathyan Mokeri on Wednesday criticised his UDF counterpart Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for leaving the constituency soon after filing nominations and said she would not be with the people of the hill segment if she wins from here.

Like her brother Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka would also come here and go as a guest, and she wouldn't be present in the constituency, he alleged.

Left candidate came out with the criticism a day after Priyanka wrapped up her first round of corner meetings in the constituency as part of the campaign for 13 November polls. A senior leader of the CPI and a former MLA, Mokeri, said the people of Wayanad experienced the result of electing Rahul Gandhi in the past five years and the voters could not even see him. "Now, the UDF candidate left the constituency soon after filing the nomination papers. This is what they show to the people," he said.

Besides Mokeri, BJP's Navya Haridas, a two-time councillor of the Kozhikode Corporation, is the other candidate in the constituency. *—PTI*

## Case filed over clash between NC, BJP in J&K

**SRINAGAR, 30 OCT**

Police have registered a case after several people were injured allegedly in clashes between the supporters of National Conference (NC) and BJP in Gurez area of Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district, officials said on Wednesday.

Several people were injured after the rally of Gurez MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan, who is also known as Gurezi, was attacked by a mob in Gujran area of Tulail in the north Kashmir district Tuesday evening, the officials said. *—PTI*

## BJP files writ petition against AAP for not imposing Ayushman Bharat scheme

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Virendra Sachdeva *PHOTO: ANI*

Delhi BJP MPs have filed a writ petition in High Court against AAP government's decision to not implement Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in Delhi, state president Virendra Sachdeva said on Wednesday.

In a press conference, Sachdeva slammed AAP and its convener Arvind Kejriwal for depriving lakhs of eligible people in Delhi of the Centre's health insurance scheme.

Addressing the issue in a press conference earlier in the day, Kejriwal alleged that the scheme is riddled with scams according to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

He also said the scheme does not require to be implemented in the national capital as health services here are provided free of cost by his government.

"Everything, from medicines costing Rs 5 to operations costing Rs 1 crore, is free. If medicines, tests, and treatment are all free in Delhi, then there is no need for the Ayushman Bharat Scheme here. Modi ji should study the Delhi scheme and implement it across the country," he charged. A slugfest ensued between the BJP and AAP over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's criticism of governments in Delhi and West Bengal on Tuesday for not implementing the scheme.

Sachdeva claimed that BJP will now fight a legal battle to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are available to the elderly and other eligible persons in Delhi. *—PTI*

## Don't vote for 'jaat' and 'bhaat' in Bihar: Prashant

**RAMGARH, 30 OCT**

Jan Suraaj founder Prashant Kishor on Wednesday urged the people of Bihar to give up supporting political parties in the name of 'jaat' (caste) and 'bhaat' (free ration), blaming the voting behaviour for the state's chronic backwardness.

Kishor, the political strategist-turned-activist, came out with the catchy rhyme at a rally in the Ramgarh.

He claimed that his home state has been given a raw deal by successive regimes in Bihar as also the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

"Lalu and Nitish kept the whole of Bihar trapped in 'jaat' for 35 years. For the past 10 years, Modi has been short-changing you in exchange for five kgs of bhaat. You must stop voting for 'jaat' and 'bhaat' if you want a better future for yourself and your children," Kishor said at the rally.

Prashant Kishore *PHOTO: PTI*

Kishor, whose fledgling party hopes to hold its own in Ramgarh which the RJD wants to retain and BJP is trying to wrest back, also asked the people not to vote for the saffron party "which has made clear it will back Nitish Kumar for another term in office after assembly polls due next year". *—PTI*

**RECORD ILLUMINATION**

## *Ayodhya sets Guinness record with 25L diyas*

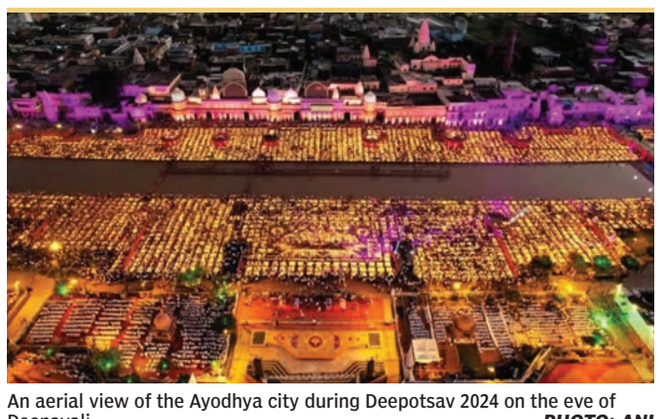
**AYODHYA, 30 OCT**

Two Guinness World Records -- most people performing aarti simultaneously and the largest display of oil lamps -- were set at the eighth edition of Deepotsav here on Wednesday.

The two records were set in the holy city with over 25 lakh earthen lamps (diyas) lit together and 1,121 'vedacharyas' (teachers of religious texts) performing aarti simultaneously.

Pravin Patel, the adjudicator at Guinness World Records, who visited Ayodhya with Guinness Consultant Nischal Bharot for verification, announced the new records here on Wednesday evening.

"With a total of 1,121, UP Tourism, District administration of Ayodhya and Saryu Aarti Samiti, you are the Guinness World Records title holder for most people performing diya rotations simultaneously. Congratulations!" Patel declared.



An aerial view of the Ayodhya city during Deepotsav 2024 on the eve of Deepavali *PHOTO: ANI*

On the second record, the Guinness adjudicator said, "With a total of 25,12,585, which translates into just over 25 lakh, UP Tourism, Govt of UP, District Administration of Ayodhya, and Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Avadh University, you are the new Guinness World Records title holder for the largest display of oil lamps!"

Patel said he was "absolutely delighted" to verify not one but two Guinness World Record titles -- most people performing aarti simultaneously and the largest display of oil lamps.

He said that "most people performing diya rotations (aarti) simultaneously" is a brand new record. "This could not have been set up with just one diya so a minimum target of 250 was set," he said.

For the largest display of oil lamps, the previous record was 22,23,676.

"While it is important that we have the numbers it is also important that you follow the guidelines. You have met the guidelines for both records," Patel noted. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## Manipur sanctions Rs 5 crore for displaced people

**IMPHAL, 30 OCT**

The Manipur government has sanctioned over Rs 5 crore to provide financial assistance of Rs 1,000 each to internally displaced people (IDPs) in various parts of the state. The amount will also cover the cost of providing items of daily need to the IDPs, an official notification said. Chief Minister N Biren Singh, in a Facebook post, said the sanctioned sum will cover Rs 1,000 financial assistance to each IDP. The amount would be distributed before Diwali and the 'Ningol Chakouba' festival, Singh had said earlier. —*PTI*

## 5 killed in clash among nomadic groups in Odisha

**ROURKELA, 30 OCT**

At least five people, including three women, died and four others were critically injured in a clash between two nomadic groups in Odisha's Sundergarh district, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place at Karamadihi village under the jurisdiction of Sadar Police Station late on Tuesday over a suspected extramarital affair, they said. All the five were hacked to death by the rival group, a senior police officer said. According to preliminary reports, some persons of the rival group entered the village with sharp weapons and attacked members of the other faction. —*PTI*

## Belgian paraglider killed after mid-air collision in HP

**SHIMLA, 30 OCT**

A Belgian paraglider was killed after colliding mid-air with another paraglider in Bir-Billing while they were practising for the upcoming Paragliding World Cup 2024 in the Himachal Pradesh town, police said on Wednesday. The accident took place on Tuesday when the two paragliders took off separately. Feyarets' body has been spotted but is yet to be recovered from the forest. The other paraglider, who suffered injuries and has been taken to hospital, got entangled in the trees and was rescued. His nationality is yet to be ascertained, police officials said. Feyarets, known only by one name, was a free flying paraglider in his mid-sixties, they said. In October last year, Polish paraglider Andrez died during a solo flight from Bir-Billing. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

## Maroon 5 set to rock Mumbai for the 1st time in Dec

**MUMBAI, 30 OCT**

American pop-rock band Maroon 5, known for hit tracks such as 'Moves Like Jagger', 'Sugar', 'Girls Like You', 'Animals' and 'Payphone', is set to hold their maiden concert in India on 3 December. The Adam Levine-led band will perform at Mumbai's iconic Mahalaxmi Racecourse, BookMyShow Live announced on Wednesday. BookMyShow Live is the producer and promoter for Maroon 5's concert in India, in partnership with Live Nation, the global producers of the tour. Tickets for the concert will be available exclusively on BookMyShow. With a career spanning nearly 30 years, Maroon 5 has sold over 98 million albums and 750 million singles globally, with a record-breaking 32 Billboard Hot 100 hits. Maroon 5's India concert is presented by Kotak Mahindra Bank. —*PTI*

# Ahead of Deepavali, Delhi breathes fumes

## 8 areas in red zone amid very poor air quality

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

A day ahead of Deepavali, air pollution increased considerably in the national capital on Wednesday with eight monitoring stations in red zones as thet record 'very poor' quality air.

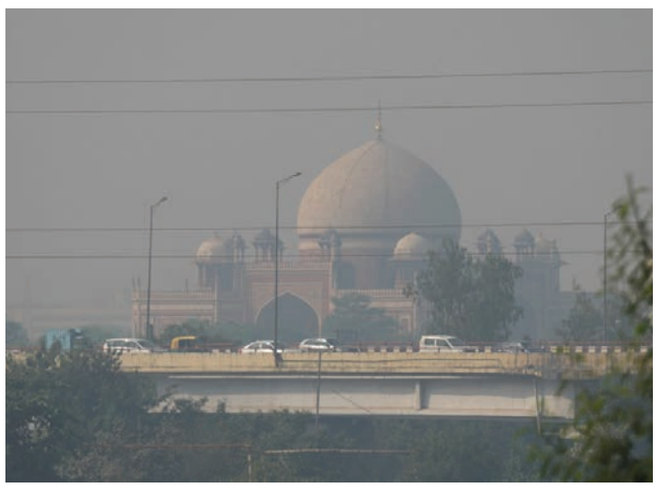
Delhi recorded an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of 278 at 9am, up from 268 recorded a day earlier.

The city's overall AQI remained in the 'poor' category— a marginal improvement seen from Tuesday due to favourable wind speed after several days of 'very poor' quality air.

On Monday, Delhi recorded an AQI of 304 and it was 359 on Sunday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good,' 51 to 100 'satisfactory,' 101 to 200 'moderate,' 201 to 300 'poor,' 301 to 400 'very poor,' and 401 to 500 'severe'.

According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board, out of the 36 monitoring stations which reported data, eight--Anand Vihar, Ashok Vihar, Aya Nagar, Bawana, Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Vivek Vihar and Wazirpur -- recorded "very poor" category AQI (red zone) in the morning.



Smog envelops Humayun's Tomb, in New Delhi, on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, temperatures have yet to start dropping. Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 21 degrees Celsius, 4.9 notches above the normal for this time of the season.

Meanwhile, former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday asked Delhi residents to refrain from busting firecrackers and light diyas, noting that Deepavali is a festival of lights and not firecrackers.

"It is not as if we are doing a favour to anybody. Whatever pollution will happen, our children will suffer from it, so there is no Hindu-Muslim in this. Everyone's life is important." —*PTI*

Salman Khan PHOTO: PTI

## MAN THREATENS SALMAN, DEMANDS RS 2 CRORE; HELD

**MUMBAI, 30 OCT**

A 56-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly sending a message to the Mumbai traffic police, threatening to kill Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and Maharashtra NCP leader Zeeshan Siddique if they failed to pay up Rs 2 crore, an official said.

The man, Azam Mohammed Mustafa, on Tuesday sent the threat message on the traffic police's WhatsApp helpline number. Earlier this month, the Mumbai traffic police's WhatsApp helpline desk had received a threat message demanding Rs 5 crore from the actor. The police had then arrested a man from Jamshedpur in Jharkhand in connection with the threat message. The Mumbai police on Monday arrested a man from Noida in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly issuing a death threat to Khan and Zeeshan.

Khan had earlier received death threats from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. —*PTI*

COURT FORMS SIT

# Crime's glorification: HC flays cops over Bishnoi's interview

**CHANDIGARH, 30 OCT**

Punjab and Haryana High Court flayed Punjab Police officers and observed that they "allowed" gangster Lawrence Bishnoi to use a senior's office at a police station as studio for his TV interview.

The court criticised the cops for providing a "studio-like facility" that led to "glorification of crime".

The Punjab and Haryana High Court directed to constitute a new special investigation team (SIT), to carry out further probe into the nexus and conspiracy between cops and the Bishnoi.

The court - as part of a suo moto hearing into prisoners using mobile phones and other electronic devices - reprimanded the Punjab government for failing to follow an August 2024 order directing disciplinary action against senior cops who facilitated Bishnoi's interview.

"The police officers allowed the criminal to use electronic device and provided a studio like facility to conduct the interview which tends to glorify crime with the potential to facilitate other crimes including extortion by the criminal and his associates. Involvement of the police officers may suggest receipt of illegal gratification from the criminal or his associates and constitute offences under Prevention of Corruption Act. Therefore, the case requires further investigation," Bar and Bench quoted the court as saying. Lawrence Bishnoi, a suspect in the murder of Punjabi singer Shubdeep Singh Sidhu, also known as Sidhu Moosewala, had his interview aired by a news channel in March 2023. In his conversation with ABP News, Lawrence Bishnoi knew about the murder plot. The bench observed that the SIT had successfully identified that the interview was conducted within the CIA office premises at Kharar. —*Agencies*

Lawrence Bishnoi PHOTO: PTI

# Temple fire: Kerala to bear medical expenses

Over 150 people were injured in the accident PHOTO: PTI

**T'PURAM, 30 OCT**

The Kerala government on Wednesday decided to bear the medical expenses of those injured in the fire accident at a temple near Neeleswaram in Kasaragod that left 154 people injured, eight of them seriously.

Kerala State Human Rights Commission registered a case on its own and ordered a probe into the fire accident.

The incident occurred on Monday at Anjoottanbalam Veererkavu temple near Neeleswaram when firecrackers stored in the vicinity exploded, according to the police. Three people including two temple committee officials were arrested in the incident on Tuesday after a case was registered under the Explosive Substance Act and various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed.

Besides that, the additional divisional magistrate has been directed to carry out an inquiry separately into the incident and submit a report.

The firecrackers were burst inside the temple premises without permission, and the accident took place due to its careless handling and negligence of the accused, police said. The incident occurred as hundreds of people, including women and children, had gathered to get a glimpse of the Theyyam performance at the shrine. Theyyam is a centuries-old ritualistic performance held at temples and 'kavus' (sacred groves) in the Malabar (north Kerala) region of Kerala. —*PTI*

## EX-SARPANCH'S SON RAPES, KILLS GIRL IN PALGHAR

**PALGHAR, 30 OCT**

An eight-year-old girl, who had gone to a friend's birthday party, was murdered after allegedly being raped by a man in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Wednesday.

The police have arrested a 21-year-old son of a former sarpanch (village head), an official said. The victim, resident of a village in Mokhada taluka, went to the birthday party of her friend in the village on Sunday but did not return home. Her family members then carried out a search for her. The victim's body was found near a graveyard in the village on Sunday night.

The man stalked the girl on Sunday and then raped and murdered her at night. —*PTI*

# 3 molest, 'convert' minor in U'khand

**NEW TEHRI, 30 OCT**

A barber, his brother and another man were arrested for allegedly molesting and forcing a minor girl to undergo religious conversion, police here said on Wednesday.

Salman, the barber, his brother, and a local named Rakesh Bhatt, who helped him elope with the girl, were arrested from Najibabad in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, police said.

A complaint was lodged on Monday at Kirtinagar Police Station by the mother of the class 10 student, he said.

The woman accused Salman of molesting her daughter and trying to convert her. However, the same day around 11 pm, the girl vanished from her house, the officer said. A team constituted immediately in the wake of her disappearance, traced the girl in about 15 hours, he said.

People vandalise shops over alleged molestation of a minor girl by a barber PHOTO: PTI

Salman was booked under the Uttarakhand Religious Freedom Act and the POCSO Act. After the girl's disappearance, locals vandalised several shops run by the Muslims and took out a demonstration from the Kirtinagar main market to Jakhani. Since then, police have been deployed in the market area and people have been asked to maintain calm. —*PTI*

## Govt probes death of 7 jumbos in MP tiger reserve

**UMARIA, 30 OCT**

Three more elephants died in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Madhya Pradesh's Umaria, taking the toll to seven, while the condition of three other tuskers was serious, a forest official said on Wednesday.

Madhya Pradesh's Forest Minister Ramniwas Rawat ordered a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the death of the tuskers and asked officials to ensure strict action against culprits.

BTR's deputy director Prakash Kumar Verma said prime facie, the elephants seemed to have died after consuming Kodo millet, but the exact cause will be known after the autopsy.

Four wild elephants were found dead in the BTR on Tuesday while four others, part of the same herd of 13 tuskers, were found ill during routine patrolling, officials earlier said. —*PTI*

## 160 BIRDS FOUND DEAD IN JAIPUR LAKE

**JAIPUR, 30 OCT**

Concern is mounting after over 164 migratory birds were discovered dead around Sambhar Lake in Jaipur over the past three days. This alarming incident has drawn parallels to a tragic event in 2019, when more than 18,000 birds died in the same region due to avian botulism, a paralytic disease linked to climate conditions that promote the growth of the bacterium Clostridium botulinum.

The current cause of the recent bird deaths remains under investigation, with viscera samples dispatched to state laboratories and the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) for detailed analysis. Preliminary indications suggest that avian botulism may once again be responsible, as the disease can lead to severe neuromuscular issues in affected birds. —*Salar News*

MOM HOLDS SON FOR HOURS

# Teenager beheaded in fight over land in UP

**JAUNPUR, 30 OCT**

A 17-year-old boy was beheaded with a sword in a fight over a piece of land in Kabiruddinpur village on Wednesday, police said.

The teenager's wailing mother sat with the severed head in her lap for hours.

Superintendent of Police Ajaypal Sharma said the violence was a consequence of a land dispute between villagers Ramjeet Yadav and Lalta Yadav.

"Ramesh Yadav, son of Lalta Yadav, began clearing the disputed land this morning that flared up the tension," he said.

"During the confrontation, Ramesh attacked Anurag Yadav, son of Ramjeet Yadav, with a sword and decapitated him," he added.

Lalta Yadav was arrested after the incident and a hunt is on for his son Ramesh. Police have been deployed in the village to prevent any further flare-ups.

Anurag Yadav PHOTO: X

Villagers said that the boy's mother sat with the severed head in her lap for several hours.

Jaunpur District Magistrate Dinesh Chandra said the people who committed the crime will be given the harshest-possible punishment. "This is an old land dispute between the two parties and it is also pending in the civil court. I have asked for a report on the dispute within three days," he said. —*PTI*

## '77% women feel unsafe on Delhi buses after dark'

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Over 77 per cent of women feel unsafe commuting in Delhi buses after dark, even as the city government's fare-free bus travel scheme has crossed the milestone of 100 crore 'pink' tickets issued to women, a report said.

In its latest report 'Riding the Justice Route' report, Greenpeace India, a non-governmental organisation, said 75 per cent of the surveyed women have seen significant savings from the 'Pink Ticket' scheme, with many redirecting these funds to household needs, emergencies, and healthcare. Additionally, 25 per cent of the surveyed women have increased their use of public buses, and more women who previously avoided buses have become regular riders since the scheme's launch in October 2019, the report said. Many women have also reported incidents of harassment. —*PTI*

CRACKS IN HOMES

# *300 shifted out of Kerala village after 'explosion-like' sounds*

**MALAPPURAM, 30 OCT**

Nearly 300 people were moved to safety after "explosion-like" sounds accompanied by tremors were heard by them in the Anakkallu area here, police said on Wednesday.

The first sound was reportedly heard at 9.15 pm on Tuesday, followed by two more at 10.15 pm and 10.45 pm along with mild tremors. The sounds were reportedly heard within a 2km radius, causing panic among the residents, police said.

As many as 287 people belonging to 85 families were shifted to a school late Tuesday night, police added.

Residents said they heard alarming sounds similar to those heard from granite quarries at their place repeatedly accompanied by continuing tremors.

PHOTO: ANI

Cracks were also found to have developed in some houses in the area, they said.

"We are scared of going back to our homes. We all suddenly ran out of the house as sounds started repeating," a woman said. An elderly man said similar sounds have been heard in the area for the past 10 days. Omana, a member of panchayat, said she got a phone call from some residents when they experienced the phenomenon.

"Besides me, village officials and police also reached the place and carried out a check in the area. Then we found that cracks had developed in two houses. When we heard the alarming sound again, I brought all these people to the camp (school)," she told reporters here. —*PTI*

## MAKE A SYSTEM TO PAY LANDSLIDE VICTIMS, SAYS HC

**KOCHI, 30 OCT**

Kerala High Court noted that there were reports that victims of the Wayanad landslides are yet to receive compensation. It directed the government to set up a mechanism to disburse financial aid via the treasury or bank accounts.

The direction by the bench came during the hearing of a case initiated by the High Court on its own after the landslides that occurred in Wayanad on 30 July.

During the hearing, the Central government told the court that a high-powered committee was examining whether to declare the tragedy as a national disaster. The state told the court that the scheme to provide Rs 300 per day to the victims was being extended for 30 days. —*PTI*

## Film editor Nishadh Yusuf found dead at apartment in Kochi

**KOCHI, 30 OCT**

Noted film editor Nishadh Yusuf was found dead in an apartment here in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

He was found at around 2am in an apartment in Panampilly Nagar.

A police officer said that the incident is suspected to be a case of suicide. He, however, did not provide further details.

A Kerala State Film Award winner for Best Editor in 2022, Yusuf's notable works include 'Thallumaala', 'Chaaver', 'Unda', 'Saudi Vellakka', 'One', 'Operation Java', 'Bazooka', and 'Kanguva'.

Studio Green, the production banner behind "Kanguva", mourned Yusuf's death in a social media post.

Nishadh Yusuf INSTAGRAM

He won the Best Editor State Award for his work on 'Thallumaala'.

Upcoming releases edited by Nishad include 'Bazooka' starring actor Mammootty and the Tamil film 'Kanguva', featuring superstar Suriya. —*PTI*

**DEEPAVALI AT THE BORDER**

Miles away from their homes, the Army jawans and officers guarding the Line of Control are celebrating Deepavali, the festival of lights. Duty and celebration go hand in hand, as troops remain on high alert along the LoC
***PHOTO: PTI***

# 'Infants, elderly most hit by heatwave in India'

In 2023 alone, people in India were found to be exposed to a moderate or higher risk of heat stress for about 2,400 hours or 100 days while performing light outdoor activities
***PHOTO: PTI***

In India, over the last decade, infants and adults aged 65 or above were exposed to about eight heatwave days each year on average, increases of 47 per cent for infants and 58 per cent for older adults, compared to 1990-1999, according to a new report of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change.

In 2023 alone, people in India were found to be exposed to a moderate or higher risk of heat stress for about 2,400 hours or 100 days, while performing light outdoor activities such as walking, the eighth annual report, reflecting the work of 122 experts from 57 academic institutions and UN agencies globally, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), found.

Published ahead of the 29th UN Conference of the Parties, or 'COP29', the report revealed a country-wise assessment of how climate change is affecting people's health.

- The agricultural sector was the worst hit from potential income loss due to a reduced capacity of labour in 2023 — to the tune of over USD 71.9 billion in potential losses

It showed that 10 of the 15 indicators that help track health threats to people around the world due to global warming, including rising night time temperatures and extreme precipitation, reached concerning new records.

Further, estimating economic impacts of heat in India, the report found that the agricultural sector was the worst hit from potential income loss due to a reduced capacity of labour in 2023 -- to the tune of over USD 71.9 billion in potential losses.

Overall, in 2023, about 181 billion labour hours were potentially lost due to exposure to heat in India -- an increase of 50 per cent from those lost during 1990-1999.

The report provides the most up-to-date assessment of the links between health and climate change, the authors said.

With health threats due to climate change reaching concerning levels, the authors are calling out governments and companies who continue "fuelling the fire" by investing in fossil fuels, all-time high greenhouse gas emissions, and years of delay in adapting, thereby endangering survival of people around the world.

Burning fossil fuels lead to high levels of air pollution, which has been studied to increase risk of varied conditions, including respiratory, cardiovascular, metabolic and neurological ones.

Transitioning to renewable energy would lower air pollution, thereby mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and benefitting human health, the authors said.

Further, as the planet continues to warm, climatic conditions have become increasingly conducive for the spread of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria, they said.

During 2014-2023, the length of India's coastline presenting conditions suitable for the transmission of Vibrio pathogens, which spread diseases such as cholera, at any time in a year was 23 per cent more than that in 1990-1999, the report said.

Also, in the last decade, the frontline population -- that living within 100 kilometres from coastal waters with conditions suitable for Vibrio transmission -- surpassed 210 million, the authors found. *—PTI*

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# SALAR

## Activists flag 'digital exclusion' of pensioners

Pension Parishad and Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) said that 'digital exclusion' is impacting lakhs of pensioners across India, especially in Rajasthan.

In a press conference on Tuesday, the MKSS said that pensioners from Rajasthan who were receiving a monthly pension between Rs 500-750, have not received any money for the past two years. This is particularly concerning since the pension amount was increased to Rs 1,000.

The Pension Parishad shared testimonies from affected pensioners, including the elderly, disabled, and widowed individuals who have been denied their pensions due to various administrative and digital barriers, a statement stated.

"Issues mentioned included wrongful death declarations, data mismatches, biometric authentication failures, and challenges in obtaining Aadhar IDs," it read.

Nikhil Dey of Pension Parishad and MKSS, highlighted the compounded marginalisation faced by pensioners on account of their age, disability, or other vulnerabilities, describing the government's approach as one of insensitivity and disregard.

"The government has effectively made Aadhaar compulsory despite claiming it won't be mandatory, leading to systemic failures that alienate those most in need of support," Dey said in the statement.

- Pension Parishad shared testimonies from affected pensioners, including the elderly, disabled, and widowed individuals who have been denied their pensions

Usha Ramanathan, a legal scholar, explained that the issues with Aadhaar's biometric reliance have been evident since the inception of UIDAI in 2010.

"The burden is placed entirely on pensioners to fit into digital frameworks that don't work, leading to serious exclusions," she said, noting that these are structural flaws rather than isolated incidents.

The press conference featured testimony from individuals whose pensions were unfairly cut. One example was Vidya, whose pension was abruptly stopped two years ago with no recourse for reinstatement, despite valid documentation, it said.

Another individual, 65-year-old Pani Devi from Jawaja, was marked as 'out of state" in system records, and subsequently denied pension support. Gudiya, a single mother, shared her story of grappling with Aadhaar issues that have prevented her from accessing the disability pension which she is entitled to for over a year, leaving her family in crisis. These stories underline the urgent need for a system overhaul to ensure that pensioners are not at the mercy of arbitrary digital errors, the statement read.

Shankar Singh of MKSS said, "In Rajasthan, the government has declared the living to be dead," and criticised the state's dependence on Aadhaar verification, likening it to oxygen -essential but manipulated - and demanded that pensions be delivered with the same enthusiasm as political campaigns.

In the statement, Justice Lokur connected these grievances to broader constitutional principles, stating, not only a social justice issue but also a matter of equality, democracy, and the right to life. When the government's system excludes its citizens, it is in violation of these fundamental rights.

Muralidharan, from the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled, highlighted the exclusionary nature of the current framework, which largely supports only those below the poverty line and individuals with severe disabilities.

"In a $5 trillion economy, we're offering mere scraps to the elderly and disabled, while thousands suffer due to restrictive eligibility and ineffective application processes," he stated. *—PTI*

Pensioners from Rajasthan who were receiving a monthly pension between Rs 500-750 have not received any money for the past two years
***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

# *What US poll means for Russia & who does Putin vouch for?*

The question posed to Vladimir Putin in September about the US election drew a wry smile and an arched eyebrow from the Russian president.

Asked whether he preferred Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, Putin caught listeners up short with his teasing reply that also included a gentle jab at President Joe Biden.

"Our favourite,' if you can call it that, was the current president, Biden," he told the audience at an economic forum in the Far East port of Vladivostok.

"But he was removed from the race, and he recommended all his supporters to support Harris. Well, we will do so — we will support her," he said sardonically, citing her "expressive and infectious laugh" that shows "she's doing well."

The election Tuesday carries significant stakes for the Kremlin, and despite Putin's noncommittal and somewhat teasing answer, it appeared to encapsulate Russia's view as a choice between two unappealing possibilities.

Analysts say neither offers much promise of improving relations that have hit their lowest point since the Cold War.

Harris, the current vice president, has taken a hard line against Russia, while Trump, the former president, is known for his admiration of Putin. Still, at the September gathering, Putin complained that when Trump was in office, there were "so many restrictions and sanctions against Russia like no other president has ever introduced before him."

Timothy Colton of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies said that the Kremlin leadership is "by and large convinced nothing good is going to come in the election from Russia's point of view."

**What will happen to aid for Ukraine?**

Harris is seen as likely to continue the Biden administration's massive military and economic support for Ukraine as Russia's invasion stretches toward a third year.

Trump has bragged that his rapport with Putin and respect from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy are so strong that he could negotiate an end to the war "in 24 hours." He declines to detail his strategy, but recent remarks criticising sanctions in general suggest he could lift those against Russia as an inducement to help settle the conflict.

During their debate, Trump twice refused to directly answer whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war, while Harris praised Western support for Kyiv and urged it to continue.

Asked whether he preferred Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, Russian President Vladamir Putin caught listeners up short with his teasing reply that also included a gentle jab at President Joe Biden
***PHOTO: X***

Trump's running-mate Sen JD Vance has mentioned proposals that could suggest Trump's thinking: having Ukraine demilitarise territory occupied by Russia and agree to permanent neutrality. Those terms would be anathema to Kyiv, but Trump has shown little sympathy for Ukraine, saying Zelenskyy "should never have let that war start."

A Harris win "likely promises continued US support as long at the administration can maintain congressional backing," the International Crisis Group said in a commentary, though it said she could seek an end to the fighting more actively than Biden did. Growing congressional animosity to vast outlays of aid for Ukraine could hobble or reshape her strategy.

**How will the US approach Russia on human rights?**

Harris has confronted Russia directly on such matters, particularly in the case of the death in prison of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. She was among the first foreign leaders to comment on his death, calling it "a further sign of Putin's brutality."

Trump put off comment for days, then did not connect Putin to the matter. He likened Navalny's punishment to his own fraud prosecution, calling his case "a form of Navalny."

Trump has called for a bill declaring there to be only two genders and pledged to keep transgender women out of women's sports — positions that parallel how Russia under Putin has rolled back LGBTQ+ rights and lauded "values."

**How will NATO be affected?**

Trump has wrestled with other members of the NATO alliance, demanding that they meet the agreed spending levels for their militaries in their national budgets. He said that as president, he warned leaders that he would not only refuse to defend nations that don't meet those targets, but that Russia could "do whatever the hell they want" to such countries.

Trump also has questioned the NATO charter's mutual-defense clause, asking in an interview why the United States should be obliged to defend the "very aggressive people" of NATO member Montenegro.

Harris says the United States' commitment to NATO is "ironclad." She has not weighed in on whether she supports Ukraine becoming an alliance member.

**What about arms control deals with Russia?**

Putin has repeatedly brandished the nuclear sword as he seeks to deter the West from supporting Ukraine.

The last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between Moscow and Washington, New START, is to expire in 2026. a year after the new administration takes office, and its prospects are troubled.

Biden renewed the treaty quickly upon taking office, and Harris could be expected to follow that support for the pact that limits the number of intercontinental nuclear missile launchers.

Russia suspended participation in 2023 — although it did not withdraw — and the US retaliated with measures including halting the sharing of information on missiles' location and status.

Trump, although he has warned of the threat of "nuclear warming," took steps while in office to dismantle the arms control regime, including pulling out of the INF Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear weapons — which banned ground-based nuclear and conventional missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometers (310-3,410 miles),

While in office, Trump called for a new nuclear pact that would include both Russia and China.. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

## New sanctions target Myanmar's military suppliers

**BANGKOK, 30 OCT**

Opponents of Myanmar's military government on Wednesday welcomed the latest sanctions imposed by the European Union, the UK and Canada on individuals and entities supplying aviation fuel and equipment to the army, which has stepped deadly airstrikes. The army is currently on the defensive against ethnic militias in much of the country as well as hundreds of armed guerrilla groups collectively called the People's Defence Forces, formed to fight to restore democracy after the military seized power from the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi on 1 February, 2021. Over the past year, the army has suffered unprecedented battlefield defeats, and has been increasingly relying on indiscriminate air and artillery strikes. *—PTI*

## China jails human rights lawyers for seeking EU talks

**BEIJING, 30 OCT**

Chinese authorities on Tuesday sentenced human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng to three years in prison, while his wife, Xu Yan, received a one-year and nine-month sentence. The couple was detained while attempting to meet with European Union officials in Beijing. According to Radio Free Asia, the Weiquangwang rights website reported, "We have learnt that Yu and Xu were sentenced this morning at the Suzhou Intermediate People's Court. They were sentenced to three and one year and nine months, respectively." Yu and Xu were first detained in April 2023 on suspicion of 'picking quarrels a charge often employed against peaceful critics of the Communist Party, while they were heading to a meeting with EU officials in Beijing. *—ANI*

## Shipyard fire: No nuclear risk, say UK police

**LONDON, 30 OCT**

Two people in UK have been hospitalised after a fire broke out at the shipyard that builds Britain's nuclear-powered submarines, but there is "no nuclear risk," police said Wednesday. Cumbria Constabulary said a "significant" fire broke out soon after midnight at the BAE Systems shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness, northwest England. Video shared on social media showed flames shooting out from the Devonshire Dock Hall building while alarms blared. The force said two people were taken to hospitals with suspected smoke inhalation and there were no other casualties. It advised people living nearby to stay indoors and keep doors and windows closed. . *—PTI*

## Typhoon nears Philippines, people evacuated

**MANILA, 30 OCT**

Villagers in northern Philippine provinces were forced to evacuate on Wednesday as a powerful typhoon approached the nation still reeling from a recent storm that left at least 182 dead and missing and emergency shelters crammed with displaced people. Typhoon Kong-rey was last tracked 350kms east of northern Cagayan province, with sustained winds of up to 185kph and gusting up to 230kph. Forecasters said it could further strengthen at sea. It was blowing northwestward and was predicted to pass near the northernmost Philippine province of Batanes before slamming into southeastern Taiwan on Thursday. "We are still recovering from the two previous typhoon and storm and here we go again," Batanes Governor Marilou Cayco said. *—PTI*

# Israel took out Iranian air defences: Report

## Israel's Iran strikes likely hit a base run by IRGC for ballistic missile construction

**TEHRAN, 30 OCT**

US based Fox News quoted an unnamed senior Israeli official as saying that "the majority of Iran's air defence was taken out." The four Russian-made S-300 air defence systems that Israel has reportedly destroyed in strikes on Iran this year — one in April, and three this past weekend — had been the only such systems possessed by the Islamic Republic as of the beginning of this year, according to a Tuesday report.

Meanwhile, Israel's retaliatory attack on Iran likely damaged a base run by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) for ballistic missile construction, and for rocket launches as part of its space program, satellite images showed. Iran only had four S-300 systems at the beginning of the year and Israel already destroyed one of them in April following Iran's previous rocket attack on the country, the report said.

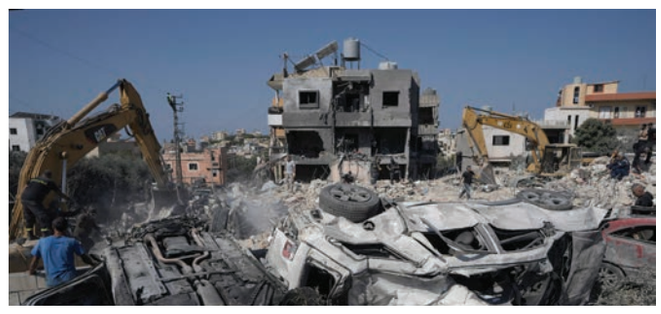
This satellite photo shows a damaged building at IRGC in Semnan province, Iran **PHOTO: PLANETLABS**

The tally matched that of a Wall Street Journal report on Sunday that said all of Iran's S-300s are now out of action.

US President Joe Biden's senior Mideast adviser Amos Hochstein was also cited as saying on an internal call that "Iran is essentially naked" and vulnerable to potential future aerial attacks. Israel has previously been reported to have also taken out other air defences surrounding key energy facilities, as well as hitting drone-production sites and key long-range missile-production facilities containing solid fuel mixers that will take at least a year to replace, hampering Iran's ability to repeat its two missile attacks on Israel this year.

The attacks on the air defences caused "deep alarm" in Iran, The New York Times reported, citing three unnamed Iranian officials — one from the country's oil ministry — since it rendered defenceless Khuzestan Province's Abadan oil refinery, Bandar Imam Khomeini petrochemical complex and an adjacent major port, as well as the Tange Bijar gas field in the Ilam Province. The S-300 has a range of up to 200kms and the capability to track down and strike multiple targets simultaneously.

It is considered one of the most potent air defence weapons in the world and can be used to shoot down missiles as well as aircraft. *—Agencies*



Rescue workers use excavators to remove the rubble of a destroyed building **PHOTO: PTI**

## ISRAELI STRIKES IN GAZA KILL 88

**DEIR AL-BALAH, 30 OCT**

Two Israeli airstrikes in the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday killed at least 88 people, including dozens of women and children, health officials said, and the director of a hospital said life-threatening injuries were going untreated because a weekend raid by Israeli forces led to the detention of dozens of medics.

Concerns about not enough aid reaching Gaza were amplified Monday when Israeli lawmakers passed two laws to cut ties with the main UN agency distributing food, water and medicine, and to ban it from Israeli soil. *—PTI*

## US LIT FOR DEEPAVALI!

World Trade Center was illuminated in colours ahead of Deepavali on Wednesday. For the first time, residents of Harris County in the US state of Texas can now legally buy fireworks ahead of the festival. In a historic move, Pennsylvania has become the first state in the US to officially declare Deepavali as a public holiday. Meanwhile, Canada's Opposition leader Pierre Poilievre came under fire from the Hindu community after he cancelled a planned Deepavali celebration at Parliament Hill **PHOTO: PTI**

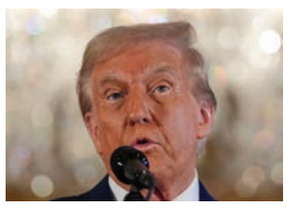
## US PREZ ELECTIONS

### Racist insults at rally a 'lovefest': Trump

**ALLENTOWN, 30 OCT**

Donald Trump has said his rally in New York City on Sunday was an "absolute lovefest", ignoring calls that he should apologise for racist comments made by speakers at the rally. He said it was an "honour to be involved" in such an event and calling the scene a "lovefest" - the same term he has used to describe the 6 January insurrection at the US Capitol.

Trump gathered supporters and reporters to his Mar-a-Lago resort two days after a massive rally at Madison Square Garden



Donald Trump **PHOTO: PTI**

featured a number of crude remarks by various speakers, including a set by comedian Tony Hinchcliffe in which he joked that Puerto Rico was a "floating island of garbage." Some of Trump's top Republican allies have condemned the remarks. *—PTI*

### Trump is unstable, revengeful: Kamala

**WASHINGTON, 30 OCT**

US Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris launched a fierce attack on her Republican rival Donald Trump, describing him as "unstable" and "obsessed with revenge" while urging Americans to reject his chaos and division.

"Donald Trump intends to use the United States military against American citizens who simply disagree with him. People he calls — "the enemy from within". This is not a candidate for President who is thinking about how to make your life better," she said.

Kamala Harris **PHOTO: PTI**

"This is someone who is unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance, and out for unchecked power," Harris said.

Harris said it was time to stop pointing fingers and start locking arms. *—PTI*

### Musk wins court battle over X post

A sharply divided federal appeals court has ruled that a federal agency was wrong to order that Tesla CEO Elon Musk delete a 2018 social media post that union leaders saw as a threat to employee stock options. Donald Trump's Truth Social is now worth more than Musk's X, owing to the recent run-up in the shares of the parent company of Truth company.

### 475 damaged ballots recovered after fire

About 475 damaged ballots were retrieved from a ballot box that was burned early on Monday in southwest Washington, a county official said Tuesday. Meanwhile, Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsey said that workers on Wednesday will begin searching through the damaged ballots for voter information in order to contact them about getting a new ballot.

### Biden calls Trump supporters garbage

US President Joe Biden sparked a controversy when he compared supporters of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump to garbage. Biden was commenting on a racist joke a comedian made at a Trump rally likening Puerto Rico to an "island of garbage." "Only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters, his demonisation of Latinos is unconscionable.

## Pray quietly: Taliban to women

**ISLAMABAD, 30 OCT**

- The ministry said on Tuesday that a nationwide awareness programme about the laws is underway involving ministry officials at provincial and district levels

Afghan women are forbidden from praying loudly or reciting the Quran in front of other women, according to a Taliban government minister.

It's the latest restriction on women following morality laws that ban them from raising their voice and baring their faces outside the home. They are already excluded from education after sixth grade, many public spaces and most jobs.

Nobody from the Vice and Virtue Ministry was immediately available Wednesday to clarify the official's remarks or confirm if the prohibition would also become part of the morality laws.

During an event in eastern Logar province on Sunday, Vice and Virtue Minister Khalid Hanafi said: "It is prohibited for a grown woman to recite Quranic verses or perform recitations in front of another grown woman. Even chants of takbir (Allahu Akbar) are not permitted."

He said that uttering similar expressions like "subhanallah," another word central to the Islamic faith, was also not allowed. A woman was not permitted to perform the call to prayer, he told the gathering. "So, there is certainly no permission for singing."

Audio of Hanafi's remarks was shared on the ministry's social media platforms but was later deleted.

The ministry said on Tuesday that a nationwide awareness programme about the laws is underway involving ministry officials at provincial and district levels.

Afghan provinces are already barring the media from showing images of living things, another controversial and widely criticised feature of the morality laws.

The Taliban set up the ministry for the " propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice" after seizing power in 2021. *—PTI*

## Ukraine, Russia eye truce on attacks on energy plants

**KYIV, 30 OCT**

Ukraine and Russia are reportedly holding preliminary discussions about stopping attacks on each other's energy infrastructure.

Earlier talks mediated by Qatar in August nearly reached an agreement but fell through after Ukraine's incursion into Russia's Kursk Oblast. Discussions, in the early stages, are expected to resume sometime soon.

Moscow remains firm that Ukrainian troops must withdraw from Kursk before any agreement is made.

Ukraine launched a cross-border incursion into Kursk Oblast in early August, allegedly seizing around 100 settlements and over 1,300 sq kms. Russia began a counter-offensive in the region in September, with reportedly minimal success. With winter approaching, Ukraine faces critical energy challenges due to the prior damage inflicted by extensive Russian strikes.

Meanwhile, North Korea's top diplomat is set to hold talks in Moscow on Wednesday following reports that Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its action in Ukraine.

North Korea has been beefing up security for its supreme leader leader Kim Jong-Un due to fears of a possible assassination attempt, South Korea's spy agency said on Tuesday. *—Agencies*

A man walks through flooded streets in Valencia, Spain on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

## AT LEAST 72 DEAD IN SPAIN FLASH FLOODS

**BARCELONA, 30 OCT**

Spanish authorities said Wednesday that 72 people have died after flash floods swept away cars, turned village streets into rivers and disrupted rail lines and highways.

Emergency services in the eastern region of Valencia confirmed the death toll.

Rainstorms on Tuesday caused flooding in a wide swath of southern and eastern Spain. A high-speed train with nearly 300 people on board derailed near Malaga, although rail authorities said no one was hurt. High-speed train service between Valencia city and Madrid was interrupted, as were several commuter lines. Floods of mud-coloured water tumbled vehicles down streets at frightening speeds. Pieces of wood swirled with household articles. Police and rescue services used helicopters to lift people from their homes and cars. Over 1,000 soldiers from Spain's emergency response units were deployed to the devastated areas. Spain's central government set up a crisis committee to help coordinate rescue efforts. Storms were forecast to continue through Thursday, according to Spain's national weather service. *—PTI*

## 3 CHINESE ASTRONAUTS ENTER TIANGONG SPACE STATION AFTER SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH

- Shenzhou 19 is the 33rd spaceflight mission.
- **Crew members:** Mission commander Cai Xuzhe, and astronauts Song Lingdong and Wang Haoze (China's only female space engineer).
- **Tasks:** Space science experiments, extravehicular activities, debris protection installation, and maintenance work.
- **Goals:** 86 experiments covering life sciences, physics, materials science, medicine, and new technologies.
- China plans manned lunar missions, a lunar station, and exploration of potentially habitable planets.
- China's Tiangong station is currently the only space station independently managed by a single country.

## 1.25M DEAD

## *TB cases hit record 8M in 2023: WHO*

**LONDON, 30 OCT**

More than 8 million people were diagnosed with tuberculosis last year, the World Health Organisation said on Tuesday, the highest number recorded since the UN health agency began keeping track. About 1.25 million people died of TB last year, the new report said, adding that TB likely returned to being the world's top infectious disease killer after being replaced by COVID-19 during the pandemic. The deaths are almost double the number of people killed by HIV in 2023.

WHO said TB continues to mostly affect people in Southeast Asia, Africa and the Western Pacific; India, Indonesia, China, Philippines and Pakistan account for more than half of the world's cases.

"The fact that TB still kills

and sickens so many people is an outrage, when we have the tools to prevent it, detect it and treat it," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

TB deaths continue to fall globally, however, and the number of people being newly infected is beginning to stabilise. The agency noted that of the 400,000 people estimated to have drug-resistant TB last year, fewer than half were diagnosed and treated. Tuberculosis is caused by airborne bacteria that mostly affects the lungs. Roughly a quarter of the global population is estimated to have TB, but only about 5–10 percent of those develop symptoms.

Advocacy groups, including Doctors Without Borders, have long called for the US company Cepheid, which produces TB tests used in poorer countries, to make them available for USD 5 per test to increase availability. Earlier this month, Doctors Without Borders and 150 other global health partners sent Cepheid an open letter calling on them to "prioritise people's lives" and to urgently help make TB testing more widespread globally. *—PTI*

## Rupee falls 4 paise to close at 84.09 against USD

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Rupee depreciated 4 paise to close at 84.09 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by weak domestic markets and month-end dollar demand from importers. Forex traders said suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) supported the local currency at lower levels. At theVW interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.06 against the greenback. It traded in a tight range and ended the day at 84.09 (provisional), down 4 paise from its previous close On Tuesday, the rupee gained 2 paise to settle at 84.05 against the US dollar. The local currency has been hovering around its all-time low level. Rupee touched its lowest closing level of 84.10 against the dollar on 11 October. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.15 per cent lower at 104.16.—*PTI*

## Aequs Infra launches FMCG ecosystemin K'taka

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Industrial infrastructure solution provider Aequs Infra on Wednesday launched a manufacturing ecosystem at Hubballi in north Karnataka to cater to the fast-moving consumer goods sector for the domestic and exports markets. Set up at the Hubballi Consumer Goods Cluster (HDC), the ecosystem will significantly boost production scale and the efficiency of manufacturing units, helping them target export markets more effectively, Aequs Infra said. The latest facility was unveiled by Karnataka's minister for large industries and infrastructure M B Patil on Tuesday. The ecosystem has a lot of potential as the manufacturers in a radius of 400 kilometres of its location account for more than 35 per cent of the market share in India, the company said. —*PTI*

## 3F Oil Palm inks pact with K'taka to empower farmers

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

3F Oil Palm on Wednesday said it has signed a pact with the Karnataka government to advance sustainable agriculture in rural communities. This partnership will provide farmers access to advanced agricultural technologies, training programmes and essential resources to enhance productivity and support Karnataka's growing horticultural sector, according to a statement. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Department of Horticulture of Karnataka with an aim to increase palm oil productivity, create economic growth and empower farmers with sustainable knowledge, offering a model for long-term agricultural success for oil palm cultivators in Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Sedam taluk of Gulbarga district, the company said in a statement. The company plans to introduce cultivation practices, focusing on sustainable growth and community empowerment. —*PTI*

## Sagility India eyes ₹2,107 crore via IPO

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Sagility India Ltd, a technology-enabled services provider in the healthcare space, on Wednesday said it has fixed a price band of Rs 28-30 per share for its Rs 2,107 crore initial public offering (IPO). The initial share-sale will open for public subscription on November 5 and conclude on November 7, the company announced. The Bengaluru-based company's proposed IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 70.22 crore shares, by promoter Sagility B V, worth Rs 2,106.60 crore at the upper end of the price band. The offer includes a reservation for subscription by eligible employees. Since it is an OFS, the company will not receive any proceeds from the public issue, and the entire fund will go to the selling shareholders. —*PTI*

# Duty cut boosts India's gold demand to 248.3T, says WGC

### Gold imports jump 21.78% to $27 billion in April-September

NEW DELHI, 31 OCT

India's gold demand witnessed an 18 per cent on-year growth during the July-September quarter of this year to 248.3 tonnes, as the reduction in gold import duty resulted in a revival in jewellery demand, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report on Wednesday.

The overall gold demand during the corresponding quarter of last year stood at 210.2 tonnes, according to the WGC's Q3 2024 Gold Demand Trends report.

In 2023, India's gold demand stood at 761 tonnes. In terms of value, gold demand went up by 53 per cent to Rs 1,65,380 crore during the third quarter of this calendar year, compared to Rs 1,07,700 crore in the same period of 2023.

Total jewellery demand during the July-September period increased by 10 per cent to 171.6 tonnes, compared to 155.7 tonnes in the same period in 2023.

In 2023, India's gold demand stood at 761 tonnes PHOTO: PTI

Momentum in consumer demand picked up sharply in late July and remained strong until mid-September, Jain added. Besides, reduction in gold import duty, some of the other factors that boosted India's gold demand include the continued buying streak by the Reserve Bank of India and good monsoon, acted as a catalyst for robust growth in lower tier cities and rural areas.

The country's gold imports rose by 21.78 per cent to $27 billion during April-September this fiscal due to strong domestic demand, according to the government data. The imports stood at $22.25 billion in April-September 2023-24. Some said that the ongoing festival demand is helping the increase in imports.

Switzerland is the largest exporter of gold, with about 40 per cent share, followed by the UAE and South Africa. The jump in gold imports pushed the country's trade deficit to USD 137.44 billion during the first half of the current fiscal compared to USD 119.24 billion during April-September 2023. —*PTI*

AMID DEMAND SLUMP

# Swiggy releases ₹11,330 cr initial share sale

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Food delivery app Swiggy on Wednesday launched a Rs 11,330-crore initial share sale, asking investors to take a pie of Indian middle class' rising propensity of online ordering.

The company, which is present in over 650 cities and towns of the country, is launching the initial public offering (IPO) amid heightened concerns on urban demand slump, and the management stressed that it is unaffected by the broader trends in the economy.

"We are also reading about it, but we are not seeing that yet in the business... So far, we have not seen the impact of demand on our business," its chief financial officer Rahul Bothra said. The issue comes amid a series of IPOs in the recent past including South Korean car maker Hyundai's mega Rs 28,000-crore issue. It will make Swiggy the second major food delivery app after Zomato to go public.

Bothra said it is possible that the company which claims to have 14 million users serves only a small part of the consumer base, unlike fast moving consumer goods companies voicing concerns on growth which serve a very broad set of consumers.

Swiggy is launching the initial public offering amid heightened concerns on urban demand slump PHOTO: PTI

- Food delivery app Swiggy on Wednesday launched a Rs 11,330-crore initial share sale, asking investors to take a pie of Indian middle class' rising propensity of online ordering

Stating that so far, the company is feeling good about the demand it is serving, he said, Swiggy will be watching the space "closely". The three years to end-FY24 saw a handsome growth.

Just like its peer Zomato, the company is also experiencing a faster growth in its quick commerce business and the newest addition already contributes 40 per cent to the revenues of the company, a senior official said, adding that it sees this space overtaking the legacy food delivery business soon because of the higher growth in it.

Group chief executive and managing director Sriharsha Majety was tight-lipped on the market share against its close rival Zomato, which is also listed, and answered a poser on higher valuation against peer, saying one must look at the opportunity ahead. —*PTI*

# Petrol and diesel commission hiked; no change in retail price

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Commission paid to petrol pump dealers on sale of petrol and diesel has been hiked without change in retail price but rates will go down in several places in states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Himachal Pradesh on account of intrastate freight rationalisation.

Commission on sale of petrol has been hiked by 65 paise a litre and that on diesel by 44 paise per litre. Alongside, the state-owned firms also rationalised intrastate tariffs which could lead to a reduction in rates of up to Rs 4.5 a litre in some parts.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) -- the state-owned market leader -- on October 29 wrote to dealers informing of an increase in dealer margin for all categories.

Commission on sale of petrol has been hiked by 65 paise a litre PHOTO: PTI

"Considering the hardship of retail outlets selling less than Rs 170 per kilolitre per month, special care has been taken to alleviate the same," it said. "You will be entitled to an upward revision of dealer margin of approximately Rs 0.65 per litre for petrol and Rs 0.44 a litre of diesel."

This is the first revision in commission paid to dealers in nearly eight years.

All the three state fuel retailers -- IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -- took to X to announce the revision in dealers' commission.

BPCL in a post said the revised commission will be effective October 30.

This would be "at no additional cost to consumers". —*PTI*

# EV makers to invest $20B in South and Souteast Asia

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers are gearing up to invest over USD 20 billion in South and Southeast Asia (SSEA) to build a robust EV industry in the region, according to a report by S&P Global Ratings.

The report highlights that while the project will be costly and face typical risks associated with international investments, it could ultimately benefit EV makers, especially those from China.

Claire Yuan, S&P Global Ratings credit analyst, said, "By our estimate, rated carmakers will be spending more than US$20 billion building electric vehicle [EV] production in South and Southeast Asia for the next few years. The expansion will likely enhance the business strength of some rated entities."

Meanwhile, Japanese carmakers, traditionally strong in SSEA's light-vehicle market, may see a decline in market share as EV adoption grows. However, Japanese companies are expected to retain a strong position for now by relying on internal combustion engines (ICE) and hybrid vehicles, which remain popular due to limited EV charging infrastructure in the region.

Korean carmakers are positioned in between, ramping up production capacity in SSEA and adjusting between EV and hybrid models depending on demand. The investment spread over several years and shared with partners will help manufacturers manage the costs. —*ANI*

## L&T secures major projects in Middle East and Africa

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro on Wednesday said it has bagged major projects in the Middle East and Africa for expanding and strengthening high-voltage electricity grids.

The orders have been bagged by the Power Transmission and Distribution (PT&D) vertical of Larsen & Toubro (L&T), the company said in a filing to BSE. As per the company's classification, orders in the range of Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore are classified as 'major'. One of the orders bagged by the company is in consortium with a leading original equipment manufacturer to build the new National System Control Centre for Kenya. The transmission hub will manage the power flow in the country by integrating diverse generation sources and by despatching power based on merit order.

In the Middle East, new orders have been secured for turnkey construction of high-voltage transmission lines in Saudi Arabia.

Additional Gas Insulated Substation projects have been received in an ongoing power system expansion project in Qatar. L&T is a USD 27 billion Indian multinational engaged in Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) projects, hi-tech manufacturing, and services, operating across multiple geographies. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

WEAK GLOBAL TRENDS

# Market snaps 2-day gains; Nifty ends below 24K

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty declined on Wednesday, dragged down by banking and financial stocks amid weak trends in global markets.

Besides, weak earnings numbers and persistent foreign fund outflows impacted market sentiments, traders said The BSE Sensex tumbled 426.85 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 79,942.18. The NSE Nifty dropped 126 points or 0.51 per cent to 24,340.85.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Axis Bank, NTPC and HDFC Bank were among the laggards. In contrast, Maruti, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, ITC and UltraTech Cement defied broader market trends and ended in positive territory.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 548.69 crore, according to exchange data. "In the near term, the market will be influenced by two factors - one positive and the other negative."With more Domestic Institutional Investors (DII) and retail money coming to the market and FII selling tapering off, the market may get a near-term boost, aided by the festive mood," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## ADANI SHARES SURGE OVER 5%

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Shares of Adani Enterprises Ltd jumped over 5 per cent on Wednesday after the firm posted nearly an eight-fold rise in net profit in the quarter ended September 30, 2024.

At the NSE, it surged 4.87 per cent to Rs 2,987.50. Adani Enterprises Ltd -- the flagship firm of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate posted nearly an eight-fold rise in net profit in the September quarter on strong earnings. —*PTI*

### NSE crosses 20 crore client accounts

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has achieved a milestone, surpassing 20 crore total client accounts in October 2024. According to NSE, this growth marks an impressive increase from 16.9 crore accounts just eight months prior, reflecting a significant surge in retail investor participation in the Indian financial markets. Maharashtra leads with the highest number of client accounts, totaling 3.6 crore, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. —*ANI*

FROM PENNY STOCK TO MAJOR WINNER

ELCID INVESTMENTS: India's costliest stock went from ₹3 to ₹2,36,250

STOCK LISTED: 24 July, 2024

LISTING PRICE: ₹3.21

PRESENT PRICE: ₹2,36,250

MARKET CAPITALISATION: ₹4,725 cr

WHAT HAPPENED?

NSE and BSE hold a special call auction session for holding companies such as Elcid which were trading far below their book value to boost liquidity, and enable fair price discovery. On 29 October, the stock was listed on BSE list and the price jumped 70,10,285.76%.

WHAT IS ELCID?

Elcid Investments, Mumbai-based company is a non-banking financial company. The promoters include Asian Paints (75%), Hydra Trading (9.04%) and 3A Capital Services (3.34%). Elcid holds a 1.28% stake in Asian Paints. Elcid share is worth more than Nvidia and FANG stocks put together. The company has four directors.

## 6 WATER AND SANITATION STARTUPS WIN ₹25L EACH

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

For 29-year-old Shilpa K Nayana, nothing, not even her four-month-old baby son, Rio aka Rayan Nayana Arjun, could come in the way, as she pitches her already award-winning project Jalam, at Karnataka Water and Sanitation Sustainability Summit held in Bengaluru.

She was among the 20 start-up social entrepreneurs shortlisted from 119 applications to pitch their project at the summit on 29 October. As the summit wound up late in the evening, six of the 20 were announced as winners of a grant of Rs 25 lakh and a chance to pilot their innovations in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR).

Nayana's project Jalam, a low-cost water filtration technology that can be used at household level as well as community level, was among the six chosen projects. —*PTI*

NEW ERA OF EMPLOYMENT

# *10% of hires hold roles that didn't exist in 2000*

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Workplace transformation is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, as 10 per cent of workers hired globally in 2024 hold job titles that didn't exist in 2000, including Sustainability Manager, AI engineer and Social Media Manager.

According to new data from LinkedIn's inaugural Work Change Snapshot, roles like Sustainability Manager, AI engineer, Data Scientist, Social Media Manager and Customer Success Manager are now commonplace.

The emergence of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and increased focus on sustainability are the prime reasons behind the demand for new job roles. In a study of more than 5,000 global business leaders, LinkedIn noted that 82 per cent of leaders in India agree that the pace of change at work is speeding up as demand for new roles, skills and technologies increases.

According to LinkedIn, roles like Sustainability Manager, AI engineer, Data Scientist, Social Media Manager are now commonplace PHOTO: X

"As we look to 2025, businesses are increasingly prioritising AI adoption, alongside meaningful investments in upskilling and reskilling their people.

Embracing AI is not just about keeping pace; it's about empowering teams, fostering innovation, and creating resilient workforces ready to thrive," Ruchee Anand, India Head at LinkedIn Talent Solutions, said.

In India, 69 per cent of HR professionals report that expectations of them at work have never been higher. Additionally, six in 10 admit that experience alone is no longer enough to stay competitive, with over half acknowledging that career growth now depends on embracing AI. —*PTI*

## India to play int'l football friendly against Malaysia

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Winless in three matches after chief coach Manolo Marquez took charge as head coach, the Indian men's football team will play Malaysia in an international friendly in Hyderabad on 18 November, national federation (AIFF) said on Wednesday. All India Football Federation (AIFF) had last month announced that the match will be played on 19 November but did specify the venue. On Wednesday, it advanced the match by a day and also announced the venue. 11-19 November is the last FIFA international match window of this year. In international matches scheduled during a FIFA window, clubs are mandated to release players for national duty. Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad had also hosted the three-team Intercontinental Cup tournament last month. India had played out a goal-less draw with Mauritius on September 3 before losing 0-3 to Syria. —*PTI*

## FIFA announces 1st Club WC sponsor with Chinese firm

**SHANGHAI, 30 OCT**

FIFA finally announced a first sponsor for its revamped Club World Cup on Wednesday in a deal that will brand video review checks at the tournament in the United States next year. Chinese consumer electronics firm Hisense will have "branding appearing in the video operation room and on pitchside screens," FIFA said in a statement, when match officials study key incidents in the 32-team tournament being played in 11 American cities from 15 June to 13 July. Less than eight months before the Club World Cup opens — with Lionel Messi's Inter Miami hosting the first game of a tournament that sees Real Madrid, Manchester City and Bayern Munich now has one sponsor but still lacks any broadcast deals. FIFA's talks for a global streaming deal with Apple+ stalled several months ago and US sponsors have been more focused on deals for men's 2026 World Cup. —*PTI*

PHOTO: TWITTER

## ICC appoints Sumathi as new Chair of ACU

**DUBAI, 30 OCT**

International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday appointed Sri Lanka's Sumathi Dharmawardena as the new Independent Chairman for its Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU). Dharmawardena replaced Sir Ronnie Flanagan, who retired from the position after 14 years in charge. Dharmawardena has served as the Additional Solicitor General at the Attorney General's Department of Sri Lanka, Government and its Ministry of Sport in numerous legal issues. —*PTI*

## CA extends coach McDonald's term till 2027

**SYDNEY, 30 OCT**

Cricket Australia on Wednesday extended the tenure of men's team head coach Andrew McDonald till the end of the 2027 season, meaning he will oversee the team's defence of the one-day World Cup in South Africa. McDonald was appointed as head coach after Justin Langer's tumultuous departure in early 2022 and has since steered the men's team to notable achievements. Under his guidance, Australia secured the World Test Championship and the 50-over World Cup and also retained the Ashes in England. The extension will help McDonald to be in charge of the side till the defence of the one-day World Cup title in 2027. —*PTI*

# India vs NZ: Lines drawn for pitched battle

### Ahead of the 3rd Test match on Friday, India summons 35 net bowlers, mostly spinners

**MUMBAI, 30 OCT**

Unexpectedly fallen behind 0-2 in a home series, the Indian team has adopted some desperate measures to improve its batters' outing against spot-on New Zealand bowlers, especially the spinners, as talks about a rank-turner for the third Test here has dominated the pre-match talks.

The net session at the Wankhede Stadium reflected the state of urgency the team management is in ahead of the final Test beginning on Friday, as even veteran batters like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have found the going tough in this rubber.

In the first Test at Bengaluru, the vaunted Indian batting line-up succumbed to the probing line and bounce, and in the second match at Pune they were outwitted by left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner, who took 13 wickets in two innings.

So, it was clear that head coach Gautam Gambhir wanted his batters to enter the final Test with better preparation.

India's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar gave a peek into the struggles of his wards, and said keeping a watch on spinners' hands is important.

They summoned a retinue of net bowlers, 25 no less, with a good mix of local spinners and pacers who helped the senior players to go through their paces for the next three hours or so. Almost every member of the Indian contingent had a long hit in the nets, including Mohammed Siraj, who played with Virat Kohli's bat while unleashing a few hits. —*PTI*

Indian players during a practice session ahead of their third Test cricket match against New Zealand, at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

### ICC Rankings: Rabada dethrones Bumrah as No. 1 Test bowler; off-spinner Ashwin at 4th

South Africa quick Kagiso Rabada has dethroned Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah as the top bowler in the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings released on Wednesday. Rabada has claimed the No.1 spot on the back of strong form for SA during the ongoing World Test Championship, with the right-armer taking his 300th Test wicket during the recent seven-wicket triumph over Bangladesh in Mirpur. Bumrah, who failed to take a single wicket in the second Test against New Zealand in Pune, has dropped two places and is now third, behind Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood, who has moved up to second. Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has also dropped two spots to be fourth with Australia skipper Pat Cummins rounding up the top five among bowlers. —*PTI*

> **India still have the wood on us when it comes to playing on turning wickets, and traditionally, the Indian batters have done well in turning surfaces**
>
> - Ajaz Patel, Kiwis spinner

### B'desh scores 10 runs in 1 ball against SA

In the second Test against Bangladesh at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram, South Africa set a massive first-innings score of 575/6. However, they stumbled at the start of their bowling innings, conceding 10 runs off the first ball. Kagiso Rabada's second delivery went down the leg side, eluding Kyle Verreynne's dive and racing to the boundary. Additionally, Rabada overstepped, giving Bangladesh five extra runs right away. South African spin-bowling all-rounder Senuran Muthusamy was also penalised for running straight down pitch. —*Agencies*

Matthew Wade *PHOTO: PTI*

## Wade: Retirement hit me after loss with India in T20

**MELBOURNE, 30 OCT**

Former Australia wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade has revealed that his team's defeat to India in the T20 World Cup earlier this year was probably the moment that ended his career as it was the first time that the thought of retirement crossed his mind.

India, led by skipper Rohit Sharma's superb 41-ball 92, defeated the Aussies by 24 runs in a crucial Group 1 Super Eight match at St Lucia to book a semifinal berth and eventually went on to bag the title.

"It (the thought about retirement) probably hit home after we lost against India. That was when I really sat down and reflected that that was probably the end of my career. That was an emotional moment," Wade, who announced his retirement from international cricket on Tuesday, told cricket.com.au. —*PTI*

Matthew Ebden and Rohan Bopanna *PHOTO: X*

## Bopanna-Ebden advance to QFs of Paris Masters

**PARIS, 30 OCT**

Veteran Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden advanced to the quarterfinals of the men's doubles event of the Paris Masters here.

The Indo Australian pair eked out a 6-4 7-6 win over the Brazilian-German combine of Marcelo Melo and Alexander Zverev in one hour 16 minutes at the ATP 1000 event on Tuesday.

Bopanna and Ebden won 91 percent of their first serve and hit four aces in the course of the match.

The third seed Ind-Australian duo made a crucial break in the first game to take the opening set.

The reigning Australian Open champions then had the opportunity to break their opponents in the fifth game of the second set but Melo and Zverev managed to hold with the match heading to a tie-breaker.

Earlier this week, Bopanna and Ebden had clinched a spot in the prestigious season-ending ATP Finals.

Alcaraz and Tsitsipas reach 3rd round

Carlos Alcaraz overcame some rusty moments on his serve to beat Nicolas Jarry 7-5, 6-1 and reach the third round of the Paris Masters.

The second-seeded Spaniard was troubled by Jarry's strong forehand at times. The Chilean broke his serve in the ninth game and held for 5-5. But Jarry double-faulted in his next service game to lose the first set.

Alcaraz saved a break point in the third game of the second set with an ace and broke for a 4-1 lead with a crisp forehand winner. —*PTI*

## Napoli passes Serie A leadership with 2-0 win

**MILAN, 30 OCT**

Antonio Conte's Napoli passed a big test of its Serie A leadership with a 2-0 win at AC Milan.

Romelu Lukaku and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored first-half goals at the San Siro and Napoli opened up a seven-point lead over defending champion Inter Milan, which visits Empoli on Wednesday.

Lukaku muscled a defender to the ground before scoring from the center of the area early on. Then Kvaratskhelia dribbled past two defenders before launching an angled shot into the far corner before the break.

Milan center forward Alvaro Morata had a potential goal waved off for offside early in the second half.

Bologna won 2-0 at Cagliari with goals from Riccardo Orsolini and Jens Odgaard; and Lecce beat nine-man Hellas Verona 1-0 with a goal from Patrick Dorgu. —*PTI*

BIG TROUBLE

# Court orders fresh probe against Gambhir in cheating case

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Directing a fresh investigation, a Delhi court has set aside the discharge of former cricketer and current head coach of the Indian cricket team Gautam Gambhir, and others in a case where flat buyers were reportedly cheated.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne set aside a magisterial court order, saying it reflected "inadequate expression of mind" in deciding the allegations against Gambhir.

"The allegations also merit further investigation into the role of Gautam Gambhir," Judge Gogne wrote in his 29 October order.

An alleged cheating case was filed against real estate firms Rudra Buildwell Realty Pvt. Ltd, HR Infracity Pvt Ltd., UM Architectures and Contractors Ltd., and Gambhir, who was a director and brand ambassador of the companies' joint venture.

The judge noted Gambhir was the only accused who had a "direct interface with the investors" in his capacity as a brand ambassador and though he had been discharged, the magisterial court's order made no reference to him paying Rs 6 crore to Rudra Buildwell Realty Pvt. Ltd and receiving Rs 4.85 crore from the company.

The court observed Gambhir had had financial transactions with the company beyond his role as a brand ambassador and was an additional director between 29 June, 2011 and 1 October, 2013, adding "Thus, he was an office bearer when the project was advertised."

The prosecution alleged the complainants booked flats in the projects and paid various amounts, ranging between Rs 6 lakh and Rs 16 lakh after being lured by the advertisements and brochures. —*PTI*

Gautam Gambhir

## CR7's penalty miss knocks out Al-Nassr

**RIYADH, 30 OCT**

Cristiano Ronaldo missed a stoppage-time penalty and Al-Nassr was eliminated from the King's Cup in a 1-0 loss to Al-Taawoun.

The five-time Ballon D'Or winner has yet to win a major trophy since signing for the club almost two years ago.

Playing at the round-of-16 stage of Saudi Arabia's premier knockout competition, Al-Taawoun took the lead on Waleed Al-Ahmad's header with 20 minutes remaining. Al-Ahmad was then whistled for a foul in the area in the 95th minute.

Ronaldo had converted all 18 of his previous penalties for Al-Nassr but this time shot over the bar to the shock of the home crowd of 14,519.

The defeat is the first for Stefano Pioli since the Italian succeeded Luis Castro as head coach in September.

Ronaldo and Al-Nassr still have two chances at silverware this season but are already six points behind leader Al-Hilal after eight games of the Saudi Pro League and have seven points from three games in group stage of Asian Champions League. —*PTI*

Cristiano Ronaldo *PHOTO: X/ @CRISTIANO*

## Uthappa set to lead India in Hong Kong Sixes

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Robin Uthappa is all set to lead the Indian team during the Hong Kong Sixes 2024. The right-handed batter expressed his excitement for the tournament and further added that he is honoured to be the captain of the side.

The Indian squad will have the likes of Kedar Jadhav, Manoj Tiwary, Stuart Binny, Shreevats Goswami, Bharat Chipli and Shahbaz Nadeem. Chipli and Goswami too expressed their delight on representing India in this fast-paced form of the game. Hong Kong Sixes 2024 kickstarts on 1 November. —*ANI*

IPL 2025

# *Kohli set to return as RCB captain*

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Virat Kohli is poised to reclaim the captaincy for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the upcoming IPL 2025 season. Following discussions with the team's management, Kohli is eager to take on the leadership role again after a brief gap. Former captain Faf du Plessis, 40, who led RCB from 2022 to 2024, is unlikely to continue due to his age. The franchise views Kohli as the ideal candidate for this new chapter, particularly with the mega auction approaching.

He previously captained the team from 2013 to 2021, leading them to the playoffs four times.

While RCB explored other captaincy options, including Shubman Gill, plans did not set in. There are also rumors that the franchise may target Rishabh Pant in the upcoming auction.

Meanwhile, Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill has decided to take a pay cut and will be the second player retained by the IPL franchise ahead of the October 31 deadline.

The first retention for the franchise would be star spinner Rashid Khan, followed by Gill, Sai Sudharsan and two uncapped players in Rahul Tewatia and Shahrukh Khan.

As per the IPL retention guidelines released ahead of the mega auction, a team will lose Rs 18 crore from the increased purse of Rs 120 crore for the first player retained, Rs 14 crore for second, Rs 11 for third while for the uncapped players, a team will have to shell out Rs 4 crore each. Travis Head and Nitish Kumar Reddy are in the bag for Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH). Head and Nitish join Pat Cummins, Heinrich Klaasen, and Abhishek Sharma in the list of players retained —*PTI with agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

## HC seeks Centre's stand on TTFI's appointment plea

**NEW DELHI, 30 OCT**

Delhi High Court has sought the stand of the Centre and Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) on a plea seeking appointment of an administrator to oversee the day-to-day functioning of the sports body.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Manmohan issued notice to the central government as well as TTFI on the public interest litigation which has also sought suspension of the federation's status as a national sports federation until it is in full compliance of the Sports Code.

Petitioner Yatharth Pandya, a former national-level table tennis player and a sports activist, alleged in his plea that TTFI was functioning in violation of the Sports Code.

He also alleged there was a systemic failure in the governance of TTFI and its affiliates, which required judicial intervention.

The PIL also sought directions to TTFI to furnish detailed financial data and forensic audits on its website in order to ensure complete transparency in compliance with the Sports Code. The matter would be heard next on 25 February, 2025. —*PTI*